Interview with Charles W. Grover

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

CHARLES W. GROVER

Interviewed by: Henry Ryan

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I am with Charles Grover in his home in Bethesda, Maryland. The date is November 2nd, and I am about to do an interview with Mr. Grover who was the Political Counselor in Bolivia in 1966 and 1967.

Q: Would you say something, Mr. Grover, just give me your name so I can test the level here.

GROVER: My name is Chuck Grover, and I was there from 1966 to 1970 as a section chief. The post didn't have the category and the terminology to have a Counselor of Embassy. Actually, I was only a first secretary, but I was the section chief.

Q: Okay, we're on the air, so to speak, and I wonder if you would tell me your memories of the Che Guevara event in the attempted insurrection in Bolivia in 1966 and '67. How the embassy heard about it, how it got involved, and what it did, what Guevara was trying to do, how the embassy reacted, as much as you can tell me about it. Thanks.

GROVER: My memory for dates is going to be very bad, but it was sometime in the spring that the story broke, and at the same time President Barrientos called in Ambassador Henderson and explained to him what he thought had happened, and I gather at that

meeting also asked Ambassador Henderson for what we came to call the Christmas list of assistance that he would need in order to combat this guerrilla activity. I don't think that Barrientos, who was a fairly charismatic character and a rather bold one, was particularly frightened by it but I think the Bolivian army was. One has to remember that the Bolivian army was made up mostly of one- year conscripts, and in the area where the insurgency took place there were mostly transplanted Altiplano campesinos, many of whom were illiterate and one of the functions of the army was to teach literacy. Most of them had World War I Mausers, and I think that only about 15% of them fired. But it wasn't even clear that any of the conscripts had fired the 15% that worked. They were simply figures in an area. Bolivia was divided into military division areas, but these divisions had probably between 500-600 soldiers which the population sometimes affectionately not called soldievados, who were simply doing their year of time.

So the army at that time, completely without mobility—I think the total armor in the Bolivian army at that time was three armored personnel carriers in La Paz which were kept at Estada Mayor, mostly to conduct golpes with, and a group of trucks up in Viacha on the Altiplano—not in Viacha, it was the 23rd motorized and I don't recall the name of the place right now, but just off Lake Titicaca.

Q: Excuse me. These terms: Estada Mayor is the...

GROVER: The Chief of Staff of the army, and that was in Miraflores, right in downtown La Paz.

Q: Okay, and golpes d'estado?

GROVER: Is coup d'etat, or overturn of government, of which Bolivia has had its share.

Although if I may digress another moment. I always felt that it was terribly unfair for American journalists to begin each story with a number of golpes d'estado that had taken place in Bolivia. Nobody would read the article unless the spectacular figure of 150 or

165 wasn't listed in the first paragraph. I always thought that was wrong and inaccurate because Bolivia at one point had a very stable kind of government between the War of the Pacific, 1879 or 1880 thereabouts, and the beginning of the Chaco War in the 1930s. Bolivia was one of the most stable governments, stable in very conservative terms. Relatively few people voting to be sure, but nonetheless it was stable so the image that American newsmen who liked to...they covered, during my time in Latin America, they seemed to cover principally crises. And they liked to understand Latin American crises terms, always began with this image which I thought was wrong, at least for part of Bolivia's history.

Going back to the Guevara insurgency. As I say, I don't recall the date. I do remember that we began an intensive review, and a concern. I don't think that any of us, early on, really believed that Che Guevara was there. We weren't quite sure what the nature of the problem was, but clearly there was an insurgency and it was more than just a small group of Bolivians. In fact, it became evident later on—and I have to try to be careful to avoid what I knew at the time from what we all knew afterwards, the hindsight version. Che's diary, I think, documents the communist party of Bolivia didn't take kindly to this rough kind of activity that Guevara had launched the group on; although a small group of Bolivians did join at some point. But we weren't entirely sure—I think Ambassador Henderson wanted to be as helpful as he could, but he always kept foremost the principle that the Bolivians had to want to do this themselves. And I think in doing that he had a very important role in restraint. The Bolivians were always urging that we do more and more. Ambassador Henderson on the other hand realized that the more we did, whether we wanted to or not, we would be out front and that might be playing into the hands of Guevara or the guerrilla chief. Whoever he was, early we understood to want to try to establish an indigenous insurrection in which the United States would appear to be the outsiders, and the Guevara people, or the insurgents, would appear to be inside people. There were a lot of reasons why ultimately this didn't work but that was the gist of what he had in mind in the model of Vietnam which was at its peak at that time was part of the script. And, in fact, I think, from

some hiding point he made clear the message to Cuba that he wanted l, 2, 3 Vietnams. I think intuitively, at first, but intellectually later on, Ambassador Henderson recognized that this is what he wanted, and even though he found himself becoming very unpopular with key Bolivians, he wasn't going to fall into that trap. He was going to compel the Bolivians to do as much as possible, that they should be out front. It would not be the Americans.

And, in fact, I remember in the first staff meeting, the first thing he did was to draw a circle around this area, and say no Americans were going to go in, which I think disturbed the military people, some of whom wanted to go down there and get a clearer idea than they could from Bolivian intelligence. No doubt they were right in that, but more important, Ambassador Henderson was correct in knowing that their presence as observers would be elaborated and magnified as somehow or other as participants and he didn't want it to appear that we were participants in this, and thereby make something out of this that didn't exist.

It's hard for me to...I think it was the April 15 discovery—if that date is correct, and I'm not entirely sure—discovery of a guerrilla focus, that is, a guerrilla camp that caused people to think a little more seriously of this. Now, that may have come two or three weeks after the first meeting between President Barrientos and Ambassador Henderson, I'm not entirely sure. But on that occasion, or shortly thereafter, three foreigners were captured by the Bolivian military; one of them was Regis DeBray, of course; Mr. Bustos, who was a bit of an artist; and Mr. Roth. The Bolivian army had these three in camp and I don't think they knew what to do with them. If we had a role in this, I'm not aware of it, but in order to try to avoid the problem of simply sitting on these without knowing what to do, they used the presence of an American Catholic priest to reveal the presence of the three. And one morning we woke up and found Presencia, the principal newspaper in La Paz, with a picture of Monsieur Kennedy and these three people. The result of that was incarceration, I think, eventually Bustos and Roth may have been released but, of course DeBray was held for a trial that took place later on. As soon as the revelation of Regis DeBray was known, the French government—in fact, the government of General De Gaulle at that

time—the mother of Regis DeBray, who was some fairly important person, I think in conservative politics, mobilized all of the Nobel Peace Prize winners of the world to try to petition President Barrientos to let this observer go. Clearly at the time DeBray—well, as he proved with his Revolution Within a Revolution— was philosophically akin to the Guevara movement. He may have moved quite a bit since then. I gather he is now an adviser to President Mitterrand in foreign affairs, in fact has been since the beginning of Mitterrand's time on Latin American foreign affairs.

But anyway, the military and the government were bludgeoned, in a public affairs sense, around the ears for a long time. I've always had the feeling that thereafter the military thought “we're not going to take prisoners.” And probably one of the reasons they decided to eliminate Che Guevara, which they certainly did at the end of the line, was because they didn't want to face the public affairs dilemma of “what do I do with him, he should be punished, he's someone who should be executed but the world will not see it that way, and poor Bolivia will come out second best.” So they solved the problem ultimately to go from the beginning to the end by killing him. The great irony was that the Bolivian army, which was indeed a threadbare army with relatively little equipment, had achieved something here and yet they could never take credit for it because they didn't produce the leader, except as a cadaver in a very unlikely scenario but that's getting ahead of the story.

Q: What was the embassy role, if any, in regard to DeBray on the trial and eventual release?

GROVER: Actually that trial took place after my time. I don't think there was any role in it. That was a purely Bolivian affair. I would imagine that the Ambassador, and I don't know for certain, would have argued for retaining the people, imprisoning them if necessary. Of course, the Bolivians knowing their political institutions were so weak, were concerned that any live insurrectionist would become rallying points for the opposition. The opposition being at any given time most of the unemployed politicians in Bolivia, which are a large number. Therefore they don't need that kind of instability and therefore they'll try to do

what they can. But what they didn't have clearly in mind was a sense of the international outrage that would accompany the killing of prisoners. And thereby weren't able to take credit for what was indeed an achievement of some note for such a small and poorly equipped army as the Bolivian army. They simply could not do it because they had sort of chosen to destroy the evidence.

Q: You're not speaking of the capture of Guevara?

GROVER: I'm just speaking of the capture of Guevara later on. They didn't do that with DeBray. I think they wished later that they had, and as I say, they weren't going to make that mistake again. That was a shame because then they couldn't take advantage of their achievement. They were always on the defense thereafter, and probably still are. Let's see where were we?

What sort of assistance did we give? I remember being in the neighborhood of Ambassador Henderson's office at one point when he was arguing with Washington to defer some kind of military assistance in favor of field rations. The Bolivian army, as I say, was poorly equipped, was totally immobile. It didn't have equipment with wheels on it. And the idea of feeding that army was to set up a 50 gallon tin and make an enormous soup, and that is not the most mobile way of running an army. You have to wait until the soup is hot, then you have to eat it and you can't move it without it slopping over. I think some people estimated that the number of calories that the army got was not enough to get it moving either. It was something like 1000 calories a day. There had been at one point a dehydration plant—this is beginning to come back now—in the Santa Cruz area, where yucca and possibly some other products were quick frozen, and that may have gotten repaired and activated by the end of the insurgency, but the important thing was to move to get some kind of mobility in the Bolivian troops and keep the guerrillas themselves on the move. I recall hearing just a scrap of a conversation between Ambassador Henderson and Washington in which he sort of put his job on the line and said, “you may have bureaucratic difficulties in this but I want you to know that this is the only thing that makes

any sense down here; field rations to get these people moving, and if you can't find a solution to that then you better get yourself a new man down here." What the Pentagon was doing was saying that these are not products that can be put into the pipeline. You can't defer a truck and get an equivalent value of dry field rations. And the Ambassador thought that was ridiculous and unnecessarily bureaucratic. That was one of the important contributions that I think he made.

Q: What did Washington want to send? What was the point of contention between the Ambassador and Washington.

GROVER: I can't tell you specifically but I know that there were certain things that could be handled by the MIL group. And, of course, it had in mind peacetime development, slow development of a military program. And it had nothing to do with the kind of problem that Bolivia faced at that time. Ambassador Henderson, I think, found himself immersed with middle range of bureaucracy in the Pentagon and unable to get them to move. Not only that, he couldn't seem to get our own people, and I suppose this would be the Office of Bolivian Affairs—I guess that was before there was a PM in the Department of State—to get them to move to cause the Department of Defense to realize that these were important things so he had to do a dramatic act. And I think I heard a piece of a dramatic act taking place. He eventually got the field rations, and they were important. And again, I'm not sure that my memory is entirely clear on this, but it seems to me that Ranger MTT, mobile training team, which came down to train the Rangers which eventually got him on the move, that that was programmed for the following year, and that was brought forward a year. Now whether or not it was financed through the deferral, through a truck or something, I'm not entirely sure. Perhaps some of the other participants remember. But everyone thought that was an extraordinary act of the US Government, and that it was part of the great knowledge that somehow or other we had, and it was very complicated to do. I think it wasn't that complicated.

Q: This was...

GROVER: This was the MTT, the use of the Santa Cruz area to train the first Ranger battalion—the mobile training team.

Q: Everybody was impressed with the fact that we brought this in rather quickly apparently in response to the insurrection.

GROVER: ...in response to the insurrection, whereas actually such teams were available in Panama and the team came simply one year earlier. Finally, I don't think that the money that was invested, the taxpayer money that was invested in this, was anymore than it would have been if there hadn't been an insurrection. They simply bought different products and services the year of the insurrection. So I think the MTT was an important role in training this Ranger battalion.

Q: MTT is sort of in terms of numbers, and you may not know exactly, but what...

GROVER: I think we're talking about probably no more than ten. There was a famous—fairly famous—Ranger type in charge of it, Major Pappy Shelton, who may have been involved in many training teams. But he was the commanding officer, he had an exec and then there were those who were engaged in the normal kinds of basic training the troops have to undergo. So it was not a large group, and they used a site for training which AID had financed a number of years before, unsuccessfully, for a sugar mill in the Santa Cruz area. They were there from four to eight weeks. I've forgotten exactly how much but I do recall that Pat Morrison and I were there for the last day of their training. Not by any great design, but I was simply showing him around the Santa Cruz area and we went there and it was the last day of their training. They then went out and it was only a month or so after, that keeping Che on the run, that...

Q: Let me just summarize my own...to be sure that I'm clear on it. They finished the training on the day you were there, and then they went...

GROVER: Then they went out to the field.

Q: ...with the specific objective of containing this insurgency.

GROVER: That's right. Containing the insurgency. Let me say that the training took place outside of the insurgent area. It was in Santa Cruz Province. The insurgency was in another part of the province so it wasn't even very close to it. If my memory serves, it was north of Santa Cruz that the training took place, and the insurgency was to the west of Santa Cruz.

Q: We hear occasionally the Americans referred to as Green Berets. When we hear that is that a reference to this group of ten or so people?

GROVER: It could very well be. This was an era when US military had all kinds of fancy gear because it came out of the Vietnam engagement. I remember that Air Force people sometimes...they had to have their Rangers, and they looked a little like cowboys, wearing cowboy hats and things like that. So I'm not surprised that there was a certain amount of exaggeration in the press. Of course, this was exactly what all of this flamboyance helped the Che message. But Che had made so many mistakes in the design of his program, and Ambassador Henderson, I think, had succeeded in keeping the numbers down so that the flamboyance didn't become overwhelming.

Q: The numbers of American military?

GROVER: ...American military.

Q: I was just about to ask you. This group was the only group of American military. Or were there others?

GROVER: Well, let's see. There was a MIL group attached to the embassy, and that was a fairly sizeable group, but they were all involved in education and training. How large was

it? Maybe twenty. One of their numbers was an Air Force officer in Santa Cruz who was attached to the Air Force academy there. I think he was the one that always struck me as being very flamboyant with that ten gallon hat and all of that. There was an Army officer at Cochabamba. These were ongoing assignments at the time, and he was connected with some of the military schools in Cochabamba. And then the rest of the group was in La Paz. The man in charge at that time, I think, was a Colonel Kimble. I think Colonel Kimble was an Air Force officer. That was to satisfy Barrientos who was an Air Force officer even though the Army program was bigger than the Air Force program. It made sense to have an Air Force guy in charge because of Barrientos' role.

Q: And we also had two military attach#s. Am I right? An Air Force and an Army?

GROVER: We had a Defense Attach# who was an Army...I'm sorry, we had a Defense Attach# who was Air Force also, Colonel Mance, who came in about the same time that I did. And then there was an Army Attach# who had been there for some time, whose name was Don Yoder. And there was an assistant Army Attach#. He doubled as a Naval Attach# too. You have to realize that the Bolivians had just created a political navy in order to seem to make good on their aspirations to return to the sea. They had converted the lake and river force into a navy, together with starched whites, and all of that which nobody seemed to take too seriously, but they did. Let's see, where are we?

One of the memories I have is when they came out into the open at one point, on the road between Santa Cruz and Cochabamba at Sorata. I think was sometime around the Fourth of July that year. There were some identifications made based upon interviews that, yes, you have a picture of Che Guevara, and yes, that man was among them. Some of us, and I confess I was one of the cynical ones too that thought that...somebody had asked a leading question and they got the answer. Campesinos are very complicated to ask questions of, because they simply will give the answer they think the person asking the question wants them to give. So I didn't find that particularly persuasive and yet he did come out in the open at that time. His health was beginning to deteriorate, as we found out

later, and he had to get away from the humidity and the heat of the dry cane brakes that he was in. And he came out into this open area. I think he also needed medicine and that was evident.

At some point when they were on the move, the Bolivian army came across the caches of pictures. The group wanted to document its success and had left in caves film to be developed, and things like that, and it was at that point that it began to unfold, and more and more people were persuaded that, yes, Guevara was there.

Mr. Bustos, who was a bit of an artist had done some drawings in captivity which...or had he done them later? I'm not too sure, but anyway he had puzzled people by drawing a picture of someone who could conceivably be Guevara, but he had very short hair on the top of his head and long hair on the side of his head. That was a puzzle until people learned later how Guevara had managed to arrive at the airport in La Paz in the fall of 1966 as, I think, a professional with the Inter-American Development Bank, or the World Bank, I'm not sure which, over fed and with the crown of his head shaved so as to persuade people that he certainly wasn't Che Guevara.

Anyway, we had a number of visits during that period. I don't know that any of them were crucial except perhaps to reassure the US military that whatever assistance they were giving was justified. I remember attending one such meeting. General Porter was the General in Panama at the time, the commander of SOUTHCOM, and he would come in his plane with the usual number of spear carriers, and consult with the Army. And on one of these occasions, these pictures of Bustos' were trotted out and people sort of looked at them and wondered if that could be Guevara.

Ultimately the passports were found, and the analysis proved that it was Guevara. I think it was about the 23rd of September, about three weeks before the end of Che's career, that this became public knowledge, and it appeared in all of the newspapers in the US, and in Bolivia as well. We happened to be visited at that time by C.L. Salzberger of the

New York Times who was making one of his once every five years trips to Latin America. He was there about the middle of the month, just before this revelation. He was staying at the Ambassador's, and we told him that we were persuaded finally that, yes, Guevara was there. He said—this was the middle of September of 1967—"I don't believe it. I don't believe it for a moment." He said, "I spoke to Dick Helms before I came down and he said, 'Whatever the case, you can be sure Che Guevara is not in Bolivia.'" Well, I think the analysts in Helms organization at that time...by then knew that Guevara was there. But it was fairly late in the game before people became fully convinced. Richard Helms, who was the head of CIA, wasn't convinced.

Q: You say this was in...

GROVER: This was in late September—middle to late September. I've forgotten whether Salzberger was there when the newspaper, La Presencia, had their big spread. I think that was the 23rd of September, I'm not entirely sure. But anyway, I think at that point, it was only three weeks though to the end of Che's career. He was on the move, he wasn't well, he was being harassed by the Rangers, and ultimately...I guess it was the little town of La Hiquera where he was captured. I think he was captured on the 8th or the 9th and his body was delivered up on the 10th. Presumably he had been dead for two days, but he was still limp so obviously he had not been alive two days before this. The body that was delivered up in Vallegrande by a Bolivian government helicopter was a fresh body. Their cover story was that he had been killed two days before in an engagement and that clearly had not happened. He was captured, I gather, and had been executed, and then his body had been brought up to Vallegrande for the press to see, to have some embarrassing questions asked about his end. And then, of course, the body I guess was buried in some hidden place.

But the Rangers had managed to keep this insurgent group of diminishing size on the run, and finally had captured Guevara. And I guess there were, of course, as far as I knew, two

assistants that were helping with the leadership aspects of the Rangers who were either Cubans or Americans. I'm not sure which, but they were certainly Cuban- Americans.

Q: Is there any significance particularly in their being Cuban-Americans. I understand there were two people with the Rangers that CIA had provided, I'm told. Why Cuban-Americans?

GROVER: I can only speculate on it, but I think it wasn't so far from the Bay of Pigs, and of course, there were Cubans, or Cuban-Americans who spoke Spanish and who had been trained militarily, and who had connections with the CIA. So the Cuban-Americans made a great deal of sense for the leadership role in the Ranger battalion. One of the ironies; a year after the Rangers terminated the career of Che, they were temporarily dissolved. All of their people were sent home because, as anybody who has spent any time with Bolivian history knows, a unit with that kind of a record of true success became a political factor almost overnight and in order to terminate it...and I think it was probably done during a succeeding regime, or it could have been done during Barrientos'...Barrientos lived until April of 1969 when he died in a helicopter crash. But anyway, the fact of the matter was that the Ranger battalion, even though some of them had come in since, were sent home and the unit temporarily disbanded because of the potential for making politics that such a group would have. And since the Chaco war that had become the bane of Bolivian politics, anybody who had proven important in a military achievement could look forward to becoming president of the republic for a brief period of time.

Q: Did the embassy not know about the capture of Guevara until he was dead?

GROVER: I have a feeling that we probably knew. I didn't know. I wasn't privy...I don't think I knew. I don't believe I did. But the story known privately, and the story known publicly is so intermingled in my mind that I've no way of sorting it out. But I think most people knew most of what had happened in a fairly short period of time, or at least some versions of what had happened. If I recall correctly, a Lieutenant Gary Prado was supposed to have captured Guevara in a fire fight, and as I understand it Guevara's

weapon was shot out of his hands and the stock broken so that the weapon became inoperable. Gary Prado, incidentally, was the nephew...and this is so Bolivian, was the nephew of Victor Andrade, who was perennial MNR candidate for president of the republic, and twice an ambassador to United States for Bolivia. Gary Prado became a political figure overnight as a result of that and I guess he underwent an assassination attempt a few years later and was maimed for life. I think he's in a chair if he still lives. Some of the other figures who were involved were assassinated: Zenteno, General Joachim Zenteno, who was a very bright and thoughtful person, was the commanding colonel of the territorial division that had responsibility for combating the insurgency. In an earlier Barrientos government he had been the Foreign Minister. He was only a colonel, he later became a general, but he was assassinated at some point. One of the ranking people at the Ministry of Government, Roberto Ketina__(?), was assassinated in, I think it was Hamburg, or some place in Germany where he was serving as consul, allegedly because of his role in combating Guevara.

Q: What would his role have been at the time?

GROVER: Well, he was doing the work of the Ministry of Government. The Ministry of Government is the police force in control of the police function in Bolivia. The Minister of Government, of course, would have the relationships with the CIA, for example, and whatever their police role would be, Roberto Ketina__(?) would have been involved.

Q: And Joachim Zenteno, what was his...

GROVER: He was a colonel in the army, and he was the commanding officer in the division—I've forgotten whether it was the eighth territorial division, or the seventh territorial division, but wherever, the division in which the insurgency took place. These divisions were more geographical than they were numbers of men. There were numbers of men assigned to these areas.

Q: Would he have been in command then of the Rangers?

GROVER: He was in command. He wasn't the tactical commander, but he was the commander of the region in which they operated.

Q: And General Prado was the man who presumably shot...

GROVER: ...well, captured. I'm sure he didn't shoot him.

Q: What was the interaction between the embassy and the State Department in Washington, NSC, and the Pentagon? In other words the Washington foreign affairs establishment in regard to this question.

GROVER: I sort of had the impression most of that interaction took place between the Ambassador, the DCM, and Washington. I did very little on this except to try clarify things from time to time. By and large the decision making was discussed and achieved between the Ambassador, DCM, and Washington. There were problems of Washington not appreciating how difficult it was. I think I mentioned this case of trying to get the dry field rations. It was a case in point where the bureaucracy simply couldn't capture the notion that this was something that couldn't be handled through trucks and airplanes. I might say that there weren't any airplanes that were in the program that could be helpful here except for the old T-6s which had been given years before, and which were so slow they could actually get into some of those cane brakes and make a noise and cause the group to move on to some other location. It was not sophisticated weaponry that they needed. It was simply the sort of thing that would keep body and soul together until the insurgency had been quelled. And that's what they tried to do.

Have you gotten any of the old documents? Any of the old messages?

Q: I'm working on it. It involves the freedom of information in the State Department and I think they're going to be forthcoming, and the question of the fee which I'm trying to get waived. DIA I think is going to be stickier and will take a little while.

GROVER: They'll certainly take a long time to get anything.

Q: And I'm also talking to the Johnson Library and they're going to declassify those documents. They are certain that they can.

GROVER: This question of whether or not Guevara was there or not, why did...

Q: Before you get that, let me turn over the tape because I see we're running out.

GROVER: This question of whether or not Guevara was there, of course, wasn't crucial but it did elevate it to a more serious engagement. We spent a good part of the summer trying to wrestle with this. I had an intern from Washington that summer by the name of Ralph Haberson__(?), and one of the things I loosed him on was all of the information that was available, and could he come to a conclusion one way or another whether there was an credible reason to believe that Guevara was there. He later went with the Ford Foundation, and I suspect he's fairly high in there but he didn't come into the Foreign Service as he was thinking of at the time. But he produced a very interesting document, but the document said, “We're not sure.” Because we couldn't be at that point, and we simply couldn't overcome our skepticism that he would be there.

Q: The summer of...

GROVER: This is the summer of '67. All of this took place between, at least the public aspects of it, were between March and October of 1967. Guevara had arrived, I guess, at the end of 1966 and sort of established himself slowly, and largely invisibly, in this remote area of Santa Cruz. I think there was some incident that resulted, possibly in deaths, which

brought it to the attention of the Bolivian government earlier than Guevara would have wanted, I think.

Q: Was there ever any question of sending American forces—I mean not just this group to train—but to be operational?

GROVER: I don't think that was ever an issue. That was the sort of thing that Ambassador Henderson recognized immediately would have been counterproductive in the most dramatic terms. Ambassador Henderson has spent a long career in connection with Bolivia. He had been a consul in Arica during the war, and he had been consul in Cochabamba for something like four to six years at an earlier point, and he was finishing four years as ambassador. So he knew this country very well, and he knew the particular kind of xenophobia that if you added American troops in this you would immediately polarize the political situation and play into the hands of Guevara. Guevara was the one who turned out to make the principal errors by arriving bearded in an area where there weren't bearded people; studying Quechue, whereas the language was Guarani, and all of those mistakes, instead of bringing himself into harmony with the locale, he established himself as being another foreign element. And the campesinos in that area didn't like the government, but they didn't like any intruders. They did collaborate with the Bolivian government with the understanding that the Bolivian government wouldn't harass them afterwards either. So, I think, Guevara's strategy backfired on him. He appeared to be the principal foreigner; at least in this area of endeavor, and he didn't survive his errors.

Q: Did the campesinos in that area speak Spanish as well as the Indian language?

GROVER: Probably some of them did, but I know that in Bolivia generally probably...you know, there are Aymara, Quechue, and Guaran speakers and there are a lot of them that don't speak Spanish. One of the problems that Barrientos had as president; he used to say was, “I have to persuade people there's a Bolivia.” He was quite a charismatic character and would take his helicopter and go all over the country. He visited probably every hamlet

in the country once or twice before this finally killed him. He couldn't keep it up. One of the Ambassadors who succeeded Ambassador Henderson was invited to go along with him, and he took one trip and said, “Never again. It's too dangerous.” And eventually, of course, the helicopter hit a high-power line and he went down in April of '69.

Q: I have the feeling that the result, perhaps of this episode, or perhaps of other factors, Ambassador Henderson did not emerge as a Washington favorite. Am I right?

GROVER: I think that's right. I think Ambassador Henderson didn't play the Washington game the way Washington wanted it played. Washington, to be sure, was deeply involved in Vietnam and other things and he wasn't patient with what positions he thought were foolish ones. I think that's probably true. He couldn't understand why people didn't appreciate that it was not a good idea to do certain things; or why there seemed to be misunderstanding. He thought that this was adequately reported so that they should understand the particular turn of mind in Bolivia. He didn't suffer fools easily, and he thought these were foolish positions. He didn't make friends in Bolivia either, and I don't think this view of his, which he thought was the right one, I think was very right, would make him a lot of friends in Bolivia. Because Bolivia wanted us to feel sorry for them, and to inundate them with materiel and probably more troops than would be wise—more forces than would be wise. Let's guarantee Bolivia's survival with the maximum public support. That wasn't Henderson's way of doing things. He said, “You guys have got to appreciate yourself. This is your job, you have to do it. We'll support you, but you show us that you have the resolve.” That didn't make him at all popular as you can imagine.

Q: In Bolivia.

GROVER: In Bolivia, or then in the United States. He was trying to support what he considered to be their legitimate needs and the assistance bureaucracy had trouble adjusting their nozzles and their knobs to the kinds of demands that Henderson felt were important. They weren't expensive. It wasn't a question of being expensive. There was no

additional money involved, it was just doing things differently than the Defense manual called for—the Defense assistance manual. In a way, you know, one can be happy that our people go by the book because our military are controlled by civilians and this is one way of keeping the military in check. But by golly, in a case like this, maybe they could understand that one truck deferred to next year might buy so much field rations for this year. He had a hard time getting that message across.

I really don't have too much insight into Henderson's problems in Washington within the Department of State. I think that he felt maybe, I don't know whether he may have addressed this point, that Bob Sayre was the deputy assistant secretary, that he somehow or other wasn't responsive enough. Of course, Bob Sayre had, I suppose, all of South America to be concerned about at that time, and I'm sure that there were other demands. But I think Henderson's instincts were right from the very beginning, and if there's anyone who comes out of this with very special marks I think it should be him.

I remember once when he was consul in Cochabamba he mentioned that he had been reprimanded for not being present, in an efficiency report—one of our old efficiency reports—for not being present during a period of an attempted coup. He was off fishing. Henderson loved to fish. He said, “Yes, that was true that he was reprimanded for that.” He said, “They didn't understand” (this was La Paz, not understanding, who was writing his efficiency report, I suppose), he said, “But I took Ricardo Anaya who was the golpista fishing, and that's why the golpe didn't take place, because the principal golpista was fishing with me.” That's a great story.

Q: You said he came out with high marks, but apparently he didn't get high marks.

GROVER: He didn't get high marks, but he should have gotten high marks, I think, because I think he was right from the beginning. Bolivia had a pretty effective lobby in Washington, and of course that lobby was pressing for the Christmas tree list of things. Who did they have up here? They had Julio Sanjinez, who was the Bolivian ambassador,

who was a West Point graduate, had lots of friends in the US army. People in those days...Bolivia was a very effective embassy and it went back to the days of Victor Andrade as the ambassador. He had worked in between his embassies for the Rockefellers. He knew an awful lot of people in Washington. I don't know that he was involved but he passed on to his successors as ambassador...

Q: Andrade?

GROVER: This is Victor Andrade, including two, Julio Sanjinez, this network of people who were inclined to think that Bolivia was important. People like Drew Pearson was on the Bolivian embassy list of special friends, and when Julio Sanjinez invited (successfully I should say, he actually visited), Earl Warren to visit Bolivia in early 1967—March of 1967—he was accompanied by Drew Pearson. It was pretty evident that Julio Sanjinez was a very effective ambassador. He was one of the betes noires, and Ambassador Henderson, I think, saw him as getting way out of line, and giving him a lot of trouble in Washington. Henderson wanted to see this insurgency handled in a very controlled way because he thought it could get out of hand, and the US government might get itself involved in a wholly counterproductive escalation through polarization by appearing to be too much involved in this thing. Julio Sanjinez's view, I'm sure, is, “You've got to do more.” Julio Sanjinez was a colonel, and he was responding not only to Barrientos but also to Mr. Ovando who was the commander of the army at that time. And who was a nervous nellie if there ever was one.

Q: I want to ask you several questions. One, you mentioned finding documents at one time in the group of items that apparently pretty clearly indicated that this was Che Guevara who was in Bolivia. The Ambassador mentioned this to me as well. I understand that that was not told to him immediately, or even to the station, and that it caused a great row, not so much there, but in Washington between CIA and DIA in the Pentagon. Do you know anything about this?

GROVER: No, I don't. I don't know anything about it, but DIA had it I suppose, and they just sort of sat on it probably. Do you recall the dates when this was. It's not clear to me in retrospect what the date of the capture of the material, the passports, the pictures?

Q: No I don't. I presume it would have been fairly late, it was the Ranger group.

GROVER: If it was that Ranger group, that would have been probably early September, or late August.

Q: Sounds right, but I'd have to check.

GROVER: I wasn't privy to that sort of internal conflict of the intelligence community.

Q: What were your impressions of the Bolivian reaction to the fact that it may have been Che Guevara in the country?

GROVER: Early on they were extremely alarmed. There was panic in the streets. There was a great deal of panic and that was why they kept coming back and saying, “You're not being helpful enough. We need more things. You have to realize we have a very poor army.” No, they were very much alarmed at the prospect of being singled out. They assumed that he was much more acute on rural insurgencies. Of course, a rural insurgency had worked beautifully in Cuba. This, I think, was the last rural insurgency to have any degree of success until Sendero Luminoso came out, and of course, that was wholly indigenous to Peru. This was a foreign entry into it, but the Bolivian army, and government, that was a fine point that missed them completely. They didn't have enough information. They thought there were other people involved besides whoever these foreigners were. But they were pretty sure, I'm sure longer than we were, that Guevara was there because their panic told them that.

I'm trying to remember whether that was the year—that was also the year when the Catari, Siglo Veinte went on strike, and the Bolivian army moved in. That was about in June. It

was pretty clear that Barrientos wasn't going to brook an insurrection in the mines when he wasn't quite sure what was happening in the south of the country and he sent in General Vazquez Sempertegui who killed an awful lot of miners, I think, going in there. It was on the 24th of June. It was the day of San Juan, and he simply could not afford, he thought, to have them trying to make points economically or socially or politically, while he was engaged in this in the south and therefore Vazquez Sempertegui was one of his toughest, roughest generals who tried a golpe the following year and went into exile on his Bolivian army retirement, I suppose. He didn't succeed, but he tried, but he was the right man for Catari, Siglo Veinte, he had no reservations at using his guns. And the mines were thereafter quiet, I think, until after this.

Q: I understand that the Argentines were very concerned, at least the government was. Did you have any sense of that?

GROVER: I'm sure they were. I don't recall anything particularly about the Argentines. I don't know whether they had people there. Of course, it was in the southern part of Santa Cruz so it would have been not too far from Argentina. I don't recall anything especial. I think there were some visitors from Argentina. I think General Lanusse may have come up who later became president of Argentina during one brief period.

Q: Doc Morris told me that when he was on a trip there one of the things he used to do was go and call on the Argentines, and told them it would be all right. That the thing would be contained. Do you have any feeling also about, going back again, when the Barrientos government came into power by force, Paz Estenssoro was going for a third term, he served once then came Siles Zuazo.

GROVER: Then he came back. Then he tried to succeed himself.

Q: Was that unconstitutional? That effort to succeed himself and have a term...

GROVER: Probably, probably.

Q: That was at least the excuse for the golpes d'estado.

GROVER: I don't know. I wasn't there at the time that took place in 1964. Then there was an ad hoc period of two years before an election was held, and during part of that time there was a joint presidency of Barrientos and General Ovando, and then Barrientos sort of put Ovando aside, ran for office in '66; put together a group of virtually non- existent parties; some of them had been around since maybe 1946; most of them, however, had been put together with paste and cellophane on the eve of the election, and got himself elected. I think probably it was a fair election as far as elections go in Bolivia but I suspect that you make arrangements with campesino chiefs and they deliver the vote. So you know, it was a fair vote, as fair as a vote can be in a country where the vast majority of the voters are illiterate.

Q: This event ___ Barrientos...

GROVER: In '66. Well, I think people feel it was a fair vote. He was a very popular guy. He was a charismatic character. He'd come from a small Cochabamba town that had produced one of the most colorful caudillos in Bolivian history, Mariano Melgarejo, who was like, and I think in a way Barrientos was very sophisticated, Milgargo was a very crude person but that was part of his century. But he spoke Quechua, both of them spoke Quechua, and when Barrientos went into the Quechua area he spoke Quechua with people. They appreciated that, I suspect.

Q: Was he popular with us?

GROVER: Yes, I think so.

Q: ...from the beginning.

GROVER: Well, you know, popular as an individual, or popular from a policy point of view. I suspect that back in 1964 we would have preferred not to see a golpe. That was one

of the occasional bloody ones, I think, in 1964. That was tough sledding. I doubt if we favored it particularly. I think we probably had swallowed any sense of impropriety at Paz Estenssoro succeeding himself again, or succeeding himself and going for twelve years in office. At least that had the semblance of democracy with it. But I guess we come to terms with those things after usually about a week of no relationship with them. Eventually some Latin American countries...our position has always been, or at least at that time was, that we are not the first, and probably not the last to recognize a new government. And once a government is recognized you begin to unlimber all of the relationships that exist at various levels. So I'm sure that if we were unhappy with the '64 thing, it didn't last for more than a week or so.

Q: Okay, well I think on the Guevara subject we've probably covered it unless you can think of anything that...

GROVER: I remember, just a story, speaking of Melgarejo, and Barrientos favorite predecessor, although he was a bit of a beast in a way. This goes back to the period, I guess, in the 1870s. Melgarejo was occasionally in power and his great rival was a General Belzu. And I remember General Porter, when he visited on one occasion, asked Barrientos, “What kind of political problems do you face?” And Barrientos told him this story. He said, “I'll tell you this story and you can draw your own conclusions as to what kind of problems I face with my constituency here in Bolivia.” The story he told was about a period when Melgarejo was attacking the forces of Belzu outside La Paz, a regular insurrection. One cadeo__(?) against the other, and Melgarejo was defeated and captured, and brought up to the balcony of the Palacio Quemado, which is the name of the...I guess its been burned enough to be the White House of Bolivia, and the crowd was shouting “viva Belzu, viva Belzu” and Melgarejo had with him a weapon that had not been detected, and he came forward right on the balcony in the full public view of this enormous crowd out there, and shot Belzu dead, and then looked out at the crowd, and said, “Quien

vive ahora.” And without breaking stride the group said, “Viva Melgarejo, viva Melgarejo,” so that's the kind of political problem I have.” I thought that was a very interesting story.

Q: One thing I would like to have you talk about, just briefly, then we'll break off on this topic. You were talking about the emisso del __

GROVER: Arguedes, Antonio Arguedes.

Q: ...and the diaries. Could you say a bit for the record on that?

GROVER: Well, yes, the question why would Arguedes send the diaries to Castro. I think that he had possession of them. They were supposed to be in the top drawer of his desk in his office in the Ministry of Government. They were supposed to be private, but nothing is too private in Bolivia. There was a dispute within the Bolivian army as to what they should do with the diary of Che which they had captured, and their conclusion was they should sell it to the person, or institution, that would make the highest offer. And I have a feeling that probably Arguedes, who, by the way, got his position because he had been the navigator in the Bolivian Air Force for Barrientos years before. Barrientos was the pilot and Arguedes was his navigator, so they had a close friendship over a period of years. Arguedes probably held the Bolivian army in very low respect and he thought that this was a very bad show. He was supposed to have had certain revolutionary views himself. I have no knowledge of that, but I have a feeling that he may have been so disgusted by this display of public greed that he simply put it in an envelope and sent it off through the mail to Fidel Castro in Cuba.

Q: What display of public greed?

GROVER: On the part of the Bolivian army debating within themselves as to how they should get rid of Che Guevara's diary, and the conclusion was that they should sell it to the highest bidder. They didn't get to the point of identifying too many of the bidders, I think,

when suddenly it appeared published in Cuba, and the cat was out of the bag. Arguedes had sent it out.

Q: We're getting to the very colorful and mysterious characters, wasn't he.

GROVER: He was sort of a brooding character. I sort of got the impression...I didn't see him smile very often in public anyway. He was, of course, the role of Minister of Government is not a very...I've got some pictures here somewhere if you'd like to see a picture of Arguedes.

Q: Yes, I would. He himself said he was a CIA agent.

GROVER: This was later on, I think it was 1969. I have to think carefully about this because I took home leave after three years and I found myself getting on the plane in Lima coming back with Arguedes just having completed his world tour. Arguedes made this revelation and the agency associated him with one of his old friends, I guess, and took him on a world tour. Arguedes was determined that he was going to blow the whistle so the agency withdrew their person. He came back and he did make the revelation in his own office there in La Paz as to his association with the CIA over the years. He couldn't remember enough to cause too many problems but it was a public revelation which did our relationship no good.

Q: Then too you said with someone else on a trip, or...

GROVER: The story was, and I don't know this was true, that he left Bolivia and went with somebody who somehow or other had been associated with the agency at some time, if not then, to try to talk him out of blowing the whistle, on revealing all of the knowledge that he had. Well, he came back and he had a very long press conference at the end of about a month. This was when I was returning from home leave, and had a lot of things to say but his memory wasn't terribly clear on some aspects of it. Let me see if I can find some pictures here. This had nothing to do with...I was looking at these last night... had nothing

to do with this at all. I mean since this insurgency was an insurgency, nobody who was in the public domain was involved. I have lots of pictures of Bolivian politicians but none of them were involved in any significant way with this because that was such a...here's John Fisher, the fellow on the far right.

Date: November 16, 1990

Q: This is Henry B. Ryan. I'm in the home of Charles Grover. The date is November 16, 1990. We're in Bethesda, Maryland. This is side one of tape one of the second series of interviews with Charles Grover.

GROVER: It's nice to have the opportunity to again participate in the project.

Q: Charles, I would like you to first of all tell me a little bit about your background, early days, your mother and father, what they did, where you grew up, where you went to school, how you got interested in Foreign Service.

GROVER: Okay. As I was growing up my father was a Sears Roebuck manager and he was from New England. My mother was from Minneapolis—or I should say St. Paul. They had met in Crown Point, New York just before World War I. He was a salesman for a local firm, had volunteered to join the service, and she, although I don't think they were engaged at that point, nonetheless joined the YMCA which occupied a role similar to that of USO in World War II and went to France as well. Their being together there on occasion, I think, led ultimately to their marriage in 1920, and three of us came along. He was well employed during the "20s but as we went into the big depression he lost his source of employment and as approaching, I guess, middle age in his late '30s, he had the good fortune, he always considered, to get into the Sears Roebuck executive training program. And from 1930 on for the next several years we were moving about every year as he was trained in various stores in the New England district until in 1935 he was assigned permanently to Gloversville, New York, and that's where I grew up, a small industrial town which had seen its peak in the 1980s and was working its way downhill into a kind of state which I

later came to realize was underdevelopment. But he was very interested in the town, very interested in the role of Sears in the community, and he liked it so much that he stayed from 1935 to 1952 when he retired. And then remaining there, although he was a New Englander first, last, and always, he ran for mayor and was elected mayor for four years from '58 to '62. And, in fact, both of my parents lived out their lives there, both of them dying in their '80s in the house that he had purchased back in the 1940s.

There were three of us in a very solid family situation. I had two older sisters; I still have two older sisters. I was always interested in history, in fact majored at Antioch College in Ohio in American History, and then got a master's degree at the University of Oregon some years later in American History. But I also became interested at the University of Oregon in foreign service and applied in 1951 for the Junior Management Program in Washington at the Department of State, but didn't get it. Then I was very late in the Korean War, and as a very elderly recruit I was drafted into the Army at the age of 25. And during that period I gave a great deal of thought to what I would do next and Foreign Service did cross my mind a couple of times. I also sought other options. I ended up leaving the service after two years and going back to the University of Oregon for a doctorate which I realized as soon as I got there, I definitely didn't want. Well, fortunately that summer, after I'd gotten out of the Army I took the Foreign Service exam—had learned that I had passed the written, and ultimately I took the oral at the Portland post office. This being the new system, you no longer had to bring rich kids to Washington to be examined, but the Board of Examiners would go to various parts of the country and interview the people who had passed the written examination.

I remember that oral examination almost in detail even though it took place 35 years ago, but there would be other occasions for that. But anyway, to make a long story short, the year 1956 was the year in which large classes were coming in each month to replenish a Foreign Service that had been badly decimated during the McCarthy years which were only three or four years past. Our class of 46, I believe, July, was just one of twelve classes of approximately that size that came in that year. I was delighted at the thought of

Foreign Service, I wasn't particularly prepared linguistically, but I noticed that not too many of my colleagues were prepared in that respect. And as an aside, I think one can say that the Foreign Service today is much better prepared than we were.

These classes, twelve of them I believe in 1956 which were 40 or 50 in size, and a few of those people are still in the Foreign Service, but not too many. Many of them have passed the age of retirement, or they have passed the age where they received assignments that were of interest to them, and therefore retired.

Q: In your Army service did you serve in Korea?

GROVER: No. I didn't get farther than Texas.

Q: What did you do there?

GROVER: Actually I started out—my friends find it hard to believe—in the Military Police. I was received at Fort Devens and they were selecting new conscripts six feet tall and without glasses for Military Police, and sent to Camp Gordon Georgia for training. That would have been fine but Fort Jackson, South Carolina, I think was sending over people who were under five feet six without front teeth, and so it made for a very mixed group of Military Policemen, and it wasn't an occupation that I looked forward to spending more time at than I had to. I think my commanding officers had a similar view toward my performance as a Military Policeman.

I got out of the Military Police and into troop informationafter about six months and was relatively happy with that role. And, in fact, spent two months at Fort Slocum in New York which was one of the great places to serve in the Army. My father had entered the Army in 1917, and when I was there it was just troop informationand a Chaplin school so it had probably less discipline than any Army post anywhere in the world, and that was fine by me because it was only 45 minutes from Broadway across the Sound from New Rochelle, New York. It was a lot of fun. But anyway, I didn't get overseas, to answer your question.

Q: Another question about your State Department service. Do I understand that you served for two years roughly in the Department and then went to university, and then took the Foreign Service exam? Did I follow that right?

GROVER: No. I didn't make that clear enough. I was in the university for two years at which time I applied for the management program but did not get it. And after getting my master's degree at the University of Oregon, I went into the Army for two years, and then back to the university for a year on a doctoral program. It was at that point when I saw the Oregon campus looming that I realized that I really didn't want to teach American History. I liked it, I enjoyed it, but I wanted to do something else. So I was delighted when the opportunity to enter the Foreign Service came. Those are sort of defensive reasons, perhaps negative reasons, but I was also interested in foreign affairs.

Q: Then what was your first assignment?

GROVER: Well, first assignment was in IES which was the exchange of persons program. It later became in the Department CU, and then in 1976 or '77 became part of USIA. It was always an anomaly, it seemed. In the Department of State, USIA was created in 1953 and the question always occurred to me, “Why didn't the exchange of persons program, with its leader program, international visitor program, the Eisenhower program, and several other programs, why didn't they become part of USIA from the beginning?” And I recently read a book by one of the transition teams that created USIA, and he said the reason was quite simple. William Fulbright at the time said, “You can create a separate agency, called USIA if you want to, but you'll have my permission as a significant person in the Senate, only if you leave the exchange of persons program in the Department of State.” It may be only coincidental, but about 1977 Fulbright was defeated in the primary and it was at that moment somebody with a long memory activated the separation of CU from State, and gave the function to USIA. I don't know whether that's valid or not, but I have mused over that of late.

I went from that program which I found very interesting, to become a vice consul in Valencia, Spain for two years from 1958 to 1960, a post that closed maybe three or four years after I left. It was in many regards the most satisfying post I had, at least in apparent responsibility, it loomed very large. We used to have fleet visits with thousands and thousands of American sailors hitting the beach there, and on the first occasion I was in charge of the post so I thought, “Well, if this is the kind of responsibility you get as a vice consul, there are a lot of things to be said about this profession.” But I found you could go for many years without seeing that again, and serving as extensive charge time in a constituent post which is an awful lot of fun.

Q: Were you the American at the post? How many Americans were there in Valencia?

GROVER: There were two Americans at post, a consul and a vice consul. The vice consul was essentially in charge of all of the consular activity, and the consul presumably did political reporting. In mid-Franco, which is the era we were there, there wasn't too much political reporting to do, but there were a few people that would drop by, or people we'd see, but there was certainly no organized socialist party, for example, in Valencia at the time that you could talk with. I don't think that anything we did there was more than an education for the future. Certainly we weren't doing anything significant which the Spanish desk officer delighted to tell me when I got back to the Department and went in to see him. He said, “We throw out your despatches. We don't have time to read them.”

Q: What were the relations between the US and Spain at the time—very cordial, were they not?

GROVER: They were cordial but strained. We had established several bases there, and the exchange was that we would do a great deal for Spanish development and also for the Spanish armed forces. The line that I recall was, that it was our association with the Spanish people and not an association with the Franco government with which we had many differences at the time. It was really paper thin, the real issue that had us in Spain in

such large numbers, and I say the Army and the Air Force particularly although there was also a Naval base there, was east-west relations which...it may have been mid-Franco, but it was also early cold war and that was overriding in our judgment at that time in trying to establish a relation with the Spanish government. There were radar bases all over Spain which were essentially to protect the Spaniards from a Soviet attack, I guess. There were three Air Force bases—one in the north, one in the south, and one right outside of Madrid. And there was a Naval base at Rota, and at Cartagena—one and a half Naval bases, I guess. So there were a substantial number of US troops, or I should say service related uniformed forces, to say nothing of tech-reps, and equipment provided for the Spanish army. I don't believe there were any troops assigned there as such; they all had a training purpose or were home-ported in a Spanish port for duty at sea, or in the air for that matter.

Q: That makes it sound like it was really a very important post. Why were they so cavalier about your despatches in Washington?

GROVER: Well, it was important, I think, as things increasingly happened this way. One of the big differences in the last 80 years or so is that we have decided that we don't have time for things that haven't happened in the provinces. The relationships between principals in capital cities, and the whole development of the Foreign Service moving from 700 consular establishments in 1900 to maybe 150 nowadays, with the embassies going in the other direction -the embassies increasing in number. That could start a whole line of comment but I think the nature of things is that we haven't had time in the decision levels in Washington to consider things that are happening in the suburbs, or beyond the suburbs. I think this is one of the reasons why so much of what's happened a year or so ago came as a surprise to us. We didn't have time, or staff, and maybe it's principally staff, or the use of staff, to try to understand better what was happening in people's minds and what they were about to do.

Q: I know what you mean, I think, by a year or so ago, but since this recording is for posterity, maybe you'd better tell me.

GROVER: Well stated. The changes that nobody predicted that began a year or so ago were the destruction, the disappearance of Eastern Europe as it was constituted under the Warsaw Pact. An alliance with the Soviets is just a world that the Soviets could no longer hold together. We missed all of that, and we've missed a lot of things other places too. I wouldn't say its all the fault of our people, it's partly the way we manage our resources. I think that if we had lent some importance to what people are saying in the provinces, we might have had a few more clues as to what was about to happen. I hate to be overly critical because I know there have been some very hard decisions on resources. The Foreign Service really hasn't grown in 30 years, so you have to reprogram the people to do different kinds of things. And an increasing number of people are used in non-substantive areas. They are communicators, they are security people, instead of political, economic and public affairs people. And as soon as you do that your eyes and your ears become a little less receptive. You're spending too much time internalizing on your own problems, which I'm afraid is part of what happens in a world that's fraught with uncertainty and terror.

That's another thing, protecting the constituent post. I was principal officer in Medellin, Colombia at one point, and I asked Ambassador Tom Boyatt once why he closed it, and he said, “I simply couldn't guarantee the safety of the people assigned there.” And I think that's a major reason why we...but that's not the major reason, that's an important reason, but not the major reason. I think the major reason is that we somehow or other didn't have time to try to understand the more complex set of signals in each country.

Q: Where after Valencia?

GROVER: After Valencia we were going to Guayaquil, Equador but my wife returned from Spain with hepatitis. Our assignment was canceled, and after the Department—I felt very fondly about this for some time—gave me administrative leave to take care of my family for a month or so. After which we were assigned to the African Bureau which was a bureau that had only two years existence under the Eisenhower administration and was about

to be changed in very dramatic ways by Governor G. Mennen Williams who was the first appointment that President Kennedy had made from his front steps there in Georgetown, and Governor Williams was going to do something with that mandate...

Q: Could I interrupt there to clarify one point. You said that when you were in that bureau, it only existed for two years. What preceded it to oversee our affairs in Africa?

GROVER: We had a bureau called NEA, as I recall, which was Near East and Africa, and all of what became sub-Sahara in Africa in later manifestations the African Bureau was handled by three or four desk officers up until 1958. Then in 1958 it became a separate bureau. It was a small bureau, and it tried to keep track of things but it wasn't a very aggressive presence, but it became so in 1961 when President Kennedy, I think, recognized that there was a natural constituency in the United States for him and the Democratic Party in attitudes that he took in policies that were taken by the US Government in Africa and it became a very dynamic role.

When I came into the African Bureau, for example...I should say I came into it, into the Public Affairs branch, while the Eisenhower administration was still in being, up to sometime in January and Joseph Satterthwaite...but he stayed on briefly. Joseph Satterthwaite, a career ambassador, was the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. He could hold a complete staff meeting in a very small room. Then Soapy Williams arrived and suddenly we needed a lot more space, and he got it. But he was fairly early in the game. It was said by someone in the African Bureau, in the front office, that the three problems in Africa were the three As...this was in addition to the Congo because the Congo was the overriding problem in the African Bureau at that time, but the three As were, apartheid, Angola, and Algeria—not in that order however. I think it was Algeria, apartheid and Angola. And apartheid is still with us. Algeria disappeared years ago. And Angola in a peculiar fashion is still with us.

Q: Algeria disappeared as a problem.

GROVER: Disappeared as a problem but reappeared during the Reagan years, I think as a problem for American...

Q: Algeria disappeared as a problem, and Angola reappeared as a problem.

GROVER: ...reappeared as a problem. That was the assignment that I eventually got, I guess it was mid-year of 1961 to be the first Angolan-Mozambique desk officer. Previously one desk officer had handled Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Portuguese East and West Angola, Mozambique, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia; an awful lot for one person but on the other hand what was happening there? Well, a great deal was happening and that's why they decided that this one fellow's empire was going to be divided, and he was replaced by about five or six desk officers, of which my portion was to be Angola and Mozambique. The reason that there was some focus on Angola was that in March of that year an insurrection had broken out in the north of Angola, sponsored by Up__ which was a sort of Buconga offshoot fueled by relationships with a tribe that crossed the border into the old Belgian Congo, which, of course, itself was in a constant state of excursions and alarms.

But one of the reasons that the Kennedy administration selected Angola, which didn't seem to pose any current threat at all, was that they'd made the point of trying to anticipate problems. It said early on...I think Kennedy said in his speeches to the Foreign Service, and also in other utterances, that we don't want to simply react; we want to try to get at problems before they become major problems. And therefore, even though there was no serious current problem in Angola, the Department of State in April established a task force on Angola which brought in people from different agencies, and different parts of the Department to consider this problem for the future, and what was going to happen. Governor Williams took a strong, sort of Fourth of July kind of view that we wanted them to have the right of self- determination. We weren't quite sure who “they” were, but we were fairly certain that the notion that the Portuguese were peddling that they were simply Portuguese members of departments that voted in the Portuguese legislature.

There was nothing colonial about them at all. We certainly didn't accept that as being terribly germane. And I think there was no real question. I think the historians and political scientists saw Portuguese relationship in Africa pretty well determined by their tradition, and by their own poverty. There was very little the Portuguese could do for them except to hold on. They didn't have enough resources perhaps to do it in any more than an old fashioned colonial way.

Q: Were we pressuring the Portuguese to get out?

GROVER: No. We were pressing them to try and accommodate to what we conceived to be local viewpoints. And, of course, the local viewpoints that we saw were what we thought was in the mind of the insurgents in the north, but of course our people in Angola couldn't talk to them. The only people who talked with them were people in the Congo. And I think that whole situation was somewhat skewed by that kind of a relationship. But I think at the same time there were certainly...the times for change had arrived and a revolution of rising expectations is the phrase that was used at the time, had certainly affected Angola, and it was only a matter of time—whether or not that little insurrection in the north was more than the trigger, I don't know. It would certainly have arrived. People had listened to Kenneth Kaunda who said at the time, “We would rather rule ourselves badly, than be ruled by others.” That, I think, had affected all of Southern Africa.

Q: Had that been going in the north? This started when Williams came into the Department, and this task force that you're speaking of was set up. Is that what you saw as the looming problem?

GROVER: That's right. We saw this spreading because after all a great deal of Africa had become independent in the previous few years. I think the image that people had was black nationalism moving south and eventually perhaps destroying apartheid. I don't think anybody had a very clear scenario of what was going to happen down there, but as far as Angola-Mozambique were concerned we thought it was going to be a very bad show,

and probably not unlike the developments that had taken place in the Congo where very uneducated people were thrown in as leaders through the withdrawal of the Belgians who had just sort of thrown their hands up. And, of course, the Belgians hadn't prepared the Africans to be leaders, and we saw a similar thing happening in Portuguese Africa. Now the real role that we saw was to try to prepare these people to take an important role in their own future. That was the message that Mr. Salazar, who was still very much in the saddle in Lisbon, didn't want to hear. The government didn't like the idea that the African bureau had an African desk for Angola and Mozambique. They considered they could only do business with the European bureau. So I was the desk officer without a country. I was a desk officer without a country, a desk officer to an issue. There were an awful lot of people who were interested in Angola, and various sides of it.

Q: Why did we care? This rebellion brought bad government and problems. I mean obviously we cared because of humanitarian purposes, but was there more than that in our policy that we were worried about? Communism, or...

GROVER: No, we tried to steer away from that. I think a certain number of African countries played their Soviet, or their Chinese card from time to time. That issue never really arose with the Portuguese because the Portuguese didn't have a China card or a Soviet card to play. The problem was, as we saw it then, that Angola and Mozambique were just south of the line of independent states. I've forgotten exactly when Kenneth Kaunda became the leader of Northern Rhodesia, but it was during this period and so the line of independent African countries was moving south beyond Angola and Mozambique in a way. And if the Congo had been badly...the Portuguese had done even less with their people than the Belgians had done with theirs in Zaire or in the Congo at that time. So without being able to foresee all aspects of the future, we thought some pretty bad things were going to happen unless the Portuguese took the viewpoint that they should do something to prepare.

Q: Where did we feel the US interest lay?

GROVER: I think the US interest was in part the interest of communities in the United States who adopt African issues as issues that are of interest to them. But it really dealt with periods of dissidence and conflict in Africa and what the potential was for...I suppose some people on the far right perhaps saw this as an opportunity for the Soviets. But as I look back on it I really don't see that as one of the elements. I think that became an element later on during the Carter administration when the debate over...

Q: You mean an element of US perception or an element...

GROVER: Yes, of US perception. When the insurrection began against the Angolan government in central Angola by NITA, that's when I think people began to fear that maybe there would be a Soviet role here. But anyway at that time most of what we were doing was fueled by a great amount of optimism as to what the US Government could do. Whether it had been passive for years before, it was now engaged in a lot of activity all over the world, including getting very deeply involved in Vietnam.

Q: Is this the change of administration?

GROVER: This is still the change of administrations. The US Government at that time was involved everywhere. And in many of these places it was seen as a cold war encounter. Certainly the Bay of Pigs which Kennedy inherited from the Eisenhower regime. Vietnam, which he inherited and developed I think with a very special Kennedyesque fashion. I think the best and the brightest notion is very much on the mark there, that we may have been very wrong but we had our best and brightest people making us very wrong. And we also had an awful lot of people in Africa, and we had a troop of potential independence leaders visiting Washington at that time. I remember chasing down Holden Roberto, the presumed leader of the insurrection who had come to Washington at one time to talk with people. And Eduardo Mondlane, who was the independence leader of Mozambique, even though independence wasn't at that point on his mind, I don't think. He saw it as eventually taking place. But he was teaching at Syracuse at the Maxwell School at that time, and eventually

he went to Dar es Salaam and was assassinated by either the Portuguese or a rival in the Frelimo movement. I'm not sure which, but he used to come down once a month and talk with the Africa Studies Group at the Foreign Service Institute.

Q: Who was he?

GROVER: Eduardo Mondlane was from Mozambique. As far as we could determine he was the only African from Mozambique at that time who had an advanced...maybe even a college education for that matter, but he'd been educated principally in the United States, I think at Northwestern, and the University of Syracuse. He had married an American from Chicago, and he was basically a very conservative kind of guy. At least that was my reading of him. But whenever he came to town, I was the desk officer and I liked to know, as best I could determine, what was happening in my area. And since I didn't have an embassy to talk to, I talked to people like Eduardo Mondlane. But I would say there were very few of them. He was the only one in this country who had a view on the future of Mozambique which at this time was totally quiet, as far as I could determine. The insurrection didn't break out there until years afterwards.

Q: You say there wasn't an embassy. What kind of representation was there? Both Mozambique and Angola.

GROVER: The only representation...

Q: Those were the two countries...

GROVER: Just the two. They later added Portuguese Guinea to it and that fit into the responsibility and was knocked out several times, I think. Working on Angola was really working on an issue and a state of mind rather than with an embassy. I had two consuls general to work with. There was a consul general in Luanda, and a consul general in Louren#o Marques. So there was a certain amount of housekeeping to be done—a sort of substantive housekeeping that the post management officer didn't have time for. But there

was no embassy in Washington to deal with because the Portuguese were not about to talk to Governor Williams' view of Africa. That wasn't their point of view.

And going back to this task force, to make short work of it. Governor Williams took, I think, a very genuine interest early on in this, and said, “Let's try to anticipate problems and solve them.” I've forgotten what all the recommendations in those task force papers included, but such things as talking to the Brazilians and seeing if possibly they or the Pope might have some influence in persuading the Portuguese to take a different view toward the inevitable problems that were going to occur in Angola and Mozambique. Really, one can argue we were trying to adjust, or trying to cause the Portuguese, or persuade the Portuguese, to adjust to changes in the future. But the Portuguese rightly saw that we felt that the Portuguese were probably not going to be part of that future. And they certainly did everything to make that...I mean they were adamant throughout that we were wrong, that we didn't understand; they had a 400 year relationship with Angola and Mozambique, that we had a peculiar racist viewpoint which the Portuguese do not share. They moved out all of the legends and myths of the Portuguese empire against us, and, of course, it was not in their interests.

But to make a long story short, the most advanced position on the Angola task force were by and large neutralized by the realization of the Kennedy administration that they were going to have to negotiate for the Azores base; which the then chief of the armed forces, Chief of Staff Admiral George Anderson, insisted over and over again it was the most important piece of real estate to which the US military have rights overseas. And as long as the Portuguese hold the negotiating card there...in fact as long as they didn't agree to the termination of negotiations any so- called liberal view, of the situation in Angola was neutralized. That's what happened, I think, between the European bureau of the Department of State and the Pentagon. I could see the African bureau's approach toward Angola particularly more and more isolated as my two years proceeded. Nothing really came of the Angola task force except to set forth a paper and raise issues. It raised the issue of the Portuguese base negotiations on the Azores; and that, in effect realization

that the Portuguese were going to be very hard, and were going to link performance in Africa with successful negotiations, caused us to, for all practical purposes, back off after the first year. But it was an interesting episode. This didn't prevent, I think, our taking of humanitarian interest in some of the things that were happening there.

The second year the most I think I contributed toward achieving was a modest training program in Dar es Salaam for Mozambique and refugees. There was beginning to be the formation of opposition in Dar es Salaam among African refugees that later gave rise to Frelimo. Maybe it had already, I don't recall, but in any event we developed some training programs for the unemployed in Dar es Salaam from Portuguese Africa—something the Portuguese thought was terrible but agreed to do. But anyway, the first year was all promise, and the second year was a minor training program in Mozambique. And that was the sum of it pretty much.

Q: You were there two years.

GROVER: I was there for two years and then went to Brazil.

Q: All right. This is side 2 of tape 1 of the second series of interviews with Charles Grover.

GROVER: Yes, actually, after the desk officer position, I was assigned to be the second man in the American Consulate General in Mozambique, and I took the Portuguese language which I did not have. The Foreign Service Institute very carefully, those of us going to Portuguese areas, were very carefully segregated from those going to Brazil because there were those there who thought our language would be ruined if we got too much of that Brazilian slang into our Portuguese. And then at the end of four or five months of language training I learned that the Portuguese would not visa our passports, and therefore I was going to Rio instead of Mozambique with all of my Portuguese Portuguese.

Q: They wouldn't visa your passports.

GROVER: ...to go to Mozambique, and it was sort of pre- PNGed, because, I have always assumed I worked in this never- never land that they didn't recognize, working for Governor Williams on Portuguese African problems. That was not a position that the Portuguese could ever agree to. I had made a trip to Angola...

Q: Just let me put in here that PNGed means declared persona non grata.

GROVER: I had made a trip in 1962 to Angola-Mozambique and I'm not aware of the fact that I saw any revolutionaries there. I don't believe I did. They weren't around in public in the Portuguese areas that one visited. But whatever view the Portuguese government took, it was that I was not going to go out there, nor was my family.

Q: It was just you specifically, it was not...

GROVER: No, it was me specifically. But I have a feeling it was related to the position.

Q: Was the position filled by somebody else?

GROVER: No, I don't mean that position. Let's go back on this. I'd been working for the African Bureau in ways that they imagined were prejudicial to their interest. They wanted ideally, although they could hardly demand to have a role in personnel assignments, that someone from the European bureau would go to Mozambique and would have a more balanced view of things that were happening. But they didn't think it would be useful for someone who had been listening to the talk of Governor Williams, and been marinating in that bureau for year or so to develop any kind of balance on Mozambique. I think that was really their problem. At the same time I suspect that my trip to Angola and Mozambique was very carefully monitored and they may have misunderstood some of the things I was doing. It was a very routine kind of visit, mostly with the Consulates General and taking some trips out in the country to see what country these two places were. I'd never been there before.

Q: Did you talk to any bad guys when you took your trip into the country?

GROVER: There was no way of identifying bad guys. All of the bad guys were identified in Dar es Salaam, or in Leopoldville, or what later became Kinshasa.

Q: The bad guys from the Portuguese point of view.

GROVER: ...from the Portuguese point of view. Anybody you talked with...Luanda at that time was really a Portuguese city with a hurricane fence around it. And the rest of Angola was Africa. But inside that hurricane fence, which was Luanda, was a Portuguese city. There was no one really to talk to. You really had to talk with people in neighboring capitals who harbored a sense of, and heard of revolution. They weren't going to do that at home. This was a period during which the Portuguese secret police would do away with people on fairly short notice—at least they disappeared from view. The famous P-Day.

Q: P-Day is...

GROVER: I don't know. They are initials for something— police—I don't know what it is, but I just remember the...

Q: The Portuguese police.

GROVER: The acrumin, yes. It was the Portuguese secret police, I suppose. Probably the equivalent, with additional tasks, of our FBI—the internal security kind of police. But anyway, the Portuguese desk officer, who was Frank Starrs at the time, was working on this and he raised this issue several times—the issuance of the visas for our passports —with the Portuguese embassy and finally he got the clear signal that the passports could be there until doomsday but they were never going to be visaed. Well, we ended up leaving our passports there and getting a new set of passports. We weren't going to withdraw them. We left our five passports there to be visaed and as far as I know they are

still there waiting to be visaed. In the meanwhile we got a new set of passports, and got a diplomatic visa to go to Brazil.

I came on the scene there in 1953 just as Brazil was going into...

Q: '63.

GROVER: '63, I'm sorry. Brazil was getting into a sort of a very unruly situation under Joao Goulart, which ultimately led there to the Castelo Branco overturn on the 31st of March in 1964. That sort of came in the mid-point of our time in Brazil. I was a commercial officer in Brazil—economic and commercial.

Q: You arrived in '63 to be an economic and commercial officer.

GROVER: That's right. To be industry officer, actually, in Rio. The second year I became the assistant commercial attach#, and this was about the time that the revolution took place. And after the Brazilian assignment, which was a very interesting one but from the economic and commercial side, you could see chaos coming but there wasn't much that you really understood about it. Certainly I didn't understand very much about what had happened in Brazil, especially at the beginning with my freshly minted European Portuguese I didn't understand a word that was being said. It took me a while to get a sense of the music of Brazilian Portuguese, and after a while I think I spoke it adequately but I have trouble bringing it back now with too many overlays of Spanish on it.

But anyway, we had a very pleasant assignment despite the turmoil. We had at that time, as you recall, Duke, a Defense Attach# by the name of Vernon Walters.

Q: I've heard of him.

GROVER: ...who Brazilians thereafter I think were persuaded that Vernon Walters was more than he was. There was a lot of belief among the Goulart forces that the CIA and others had been in collusion with the far right and turned Goulart out of office. As far as

I could see, from my commercial point of view, that government ceased to exist about four or five months before the revolution. We, in the embassy, going to the Foreign Office to explain positions, and trying to seek agreements on things, found we were talking to people who were shell-shocked by what was happening in Brazil, and could not make decisions. Government decisions were being made by Joao Goulart in public squares without any preparation of his own bureaucracy. There was nobody to make any kind of decisions in the country except these pronouncements in public squares.

Q: You said industry.

GROVER: I was industry officer which was mostly doing periodical studies on industrial sectors like...

Q: It was a reporting job.

GROVER: It was a reporting job, that's right.

Q: ...promoting American industry...

GROVER: No. The section was not that large. One aspect was doing sectoral reports, the steel industry, the wood industry, the fishing industry. But those were sort of term papers that you worked on and hopefully you met the CERP date.

Q: You better tell what CERP is.

GROVER: Comprehensive Economic Report Program I think is what it was and everybody had a CERP book. In those days when economic sections were fairly large the CERP was a real crown of thorns and you were always running late on your CERP requirements. Eventually they became very much relaxed.

Q: Is the requirement an on-going requirement or just a once a year report?

GROVER: On-going. Many of these industry reports were reports to be updated every two years, but they were expected to be very comprehensive.

Q: So through the year you'd have reports due on various industries under the CERP requirements.

GROVER: That's right, under the CERP requirements. There was also a monthly economic review. I was the editor of that during my two years there, as well as being industry officer and finally being assistant commercial attach# also. The line was not too clearly drawn between the economic section and the commercial section. The only clear line was in finance. State had a finance officer, and there was a treasury officer, and understanding Brazilian finance was an area that I never mastered.

Q: I don't think you're alone.

GROVER: There were too many Brazilians, including ministers of economy, and ministers of finance who understood it too well.

Q: But from your position then, because obviously you had to do a lot of reporting, what did the economy look like, or at least the industrial sector in the economy.

GROVER: Of course, since it was a chronically an inflationary economy one of the solutions was to simply print a few more cruzeiros. Characteristically the economy of things was very lively; manufacture of automobiles, trucks, whatever; because since money wasn't worth too much, people who saved, saved in commodities, and the more manufactured the commodity was, the more valuable it was because it increased in value rather than decreased in value which finished industrial goods do in a non- inflationary economy. In an inflationary economy they gain value, at least nominally so. And so a doctor who was doing fairly well instead of putting his money in the bank would invest in a new car which he would put up on blocks and not use and hope to sell at some point. He would buy things—refrigerators. And, of course, in a way that artificially made the

economy look better than it really was. It was an escrowed economy that was based upon creating goods that could be purchased for almost a kind of a barter economy. At some point things would be traded off.

Q: That brings two questions to mind. The first is, was that before monetary correction, which we subsequently in this country started calling indexing, which was designed to sort of alleviate that problem in contracts, for example.

GROVER: There was a certain amount of indexing but it wasn't as widespread at that point. If we got a contract on a house— occasionally you could get one. In fact we got a contract that didn't have a monetary correction built into it. It was in cruzeiros and at the end of the year we voluntarily gave him a 50% increase in the cruzeiros. Otherwise he would have really taken a bath on it. But about that time the monetary correction was becoming very standard. The economy is sort of like a samba. At carnival time when its really roaring, it's fast moving. And then on Tuesday, at midnight of carnival, there's a silence maybe for a week before they start practicing for the next carnival. There are no sounds around and that's the noisiest silence that I've heard, and that's the way the Brazilian economy was through Joao Goulart. He disappeared and then suddenly the post-silence carnival came. The economy tried to reconstitute itself and make a real economy rather than one of these artificial economies in which commodities were used instead of cash.

Q: The other question I wanted to ask you about was about that. Roughly what percentage could participate in that sort of saving? In other words, saving through acquired commodities.

GROVER: It must have been relatively a small percentage of people but nonetheless there was a fairly sizeable middle class in Rio. But I think in terms of the total population of Brazil —I think there were about 80 million Brazilians at that time—the middle class was mostly a

southern Brazil phenomenon, and I don't know what the numbers would be but it would be relatively small. But they had an awful lot of money.

Q: You were talking about then the post-revolutionary economy.

GROVER: Well, post-revolutionary economy, they did get a kind of stability. I do recall that it became very expensive for us, and that happens from time to time in Brazil. Brazil is going through one such period now; it's very expensive for dollar holders. And that's probably due to monetary policy that makes cruzeiros or crusadoes very scarce and therefore there aren't very many chasing dollars. And therefore dollars that need to be converted have to do it on cruzeiro or crusado terms. Anyway, trying to understand Brazilian finances is something that I've never managed to do very successfully. It's something that happens, and that's constantly out of control. The Brazilian minister of finance is simply trying to subject this to a degree of control. The irony of it all is that the Brazilians, without having a currency that works, still have the liveliest economy in all of South America. You see that at the borders between Brazil and Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, on up. The Brazilians are much more active commercially even though they don't have a currency that works. So there's something in there that does work. I don't know what it is. Maybe it's the Brazilian himself. We're getting kind of off the mark but I guess I wasn't really on the main line in Brazil. I was a member of the American Chamber of Commerce as an employee of the commercial section. I listened to the complaints of American enterprises who were not being paid. They were concerned about profit remittance legislation which they thought was changing the rules and prejudicary...

Q: What do you mean they were not being paid?

GROVER: The legislation, and I don't think my memory is good enough to try to remember it. Many of these firms had come in at a time when profits were freely remittable to the United States but by 1963 in order to try to keep much of its money at home, and given the turn of mind of the Goulart administration, it had passed legislation that limited the amount

of remittances that could go abroad. Some companies like Caterpillar reinvested it all in Brazil and made a very strong company. Brazil was a very good place to manufacture caterpillar parts and tractors for export from Brazil to other locations. But that wasn't universally the case. That was one set of problems.

The other set of problems dealt with pharmaceuticals and the tendency of Brazilian manufacturers, at least according to our pharmaceutical companies, to impinge on patents and copyrights— patents on medicines—and duplicate American medicines that incorporated the cost of research. This is a problem that we have with several European countries, and several South East Asian countries. We certainly had it with Brazil at that time. I don't know whether we have come to terms. But those were two of the major sets of problems that we had: profit remittances, and problems with pharmaceuticals.

We were beginning to have problems—one might say they were principally our problem—of exports of cotton goods to the United States. I think I began the first negotiation on the restraint agreement on the export of gray goods, which is the basic cotton cloth that Brazil was producing in large volume and beginning to export to the United States. They argued that, “With all of your aid you're trying to promote our manufacture of whatever, and to sell it on the international market.” We were arguing, however, that this is artificial, that you shouldn't try to base your future on this because the only reason you have this opportunity is that the Far Eastern countries have already agreed to restraint agreements. And which, I think, the truth lay somewhere in between. I think actually probably Brazil is so swamped by foreign textiles that it probably has trouble competing now with the Far Eastern textiles.

From Brazil—that second year, at least as an observer of Brazilian affairs—was fairly quiet because it was all in the hands of the Brazilian military.

Q: Did you get into coffee issues at all?

GROVER: I didn't get into coffee issues. That was in this foreign exchange and the financial world. I don't know if you remember John Kryzak, and Ralph Korp. They were

involved in what coffee meant in terms of foreign exchange. That's really what coffee seemed to be all about at that time. This is before soluble coffee became an issue. It was just all of those bags of coffee that the Brazilian government had under its control and was trying to dole out. No, I didn't have anything to do with coffee.

Q: Then you were saying the second year things were very...

GROVER: ...were very quiet. I went to Tulane for a year after Brazil, Latin American studies, which having gone to Brazil in the first place was sort of accidental. I really had a very keen interest in Africa, but having invested in a year of Latin American studies at Tulane it was pretty clear I was going to be in Latin America for maybe even the rest of my career because the Latin America bureau tended to be an officer trap. Once you got in it was hard to get out. Latin American affairs tended to operate in policy isolation, also. You worked in Latin America; you weren't necessarily known by the cold warriors east and west. You weren't necessarily known by the people who dealt in the big economic issues, which were east and west issues too, like Japan, United States or European market in the United States. We were north-south issues, and they were, as Henry Kissinger used to say with a certain amount of puzzlement until he mastered the business himself, which didn't take very long of course, “You people deal in theology, I don't understand what you're talking about.” The language of the OAS, the mysticism of Raul Prebisch who was in charge of ECLA at that time and was talking about deterioration, the deteriorating terms of trade of Latin America. This was Latin American theology and he didn't understand...this was Henry Kissinger, “You people need to be exposed to other parts of the world.” And, when he became Secretary of State, he tried to break up the Latin American bureau and cause other people to get the Latin America experience, and the people assigned to Latin America to get more in the main line. Not a bad idea. It didn't work particularly. This goes ahead many years, it's a digression that goes into the mid-"70s. But, the fact of the matter was, that people who worked in Latin America affairs did, and continued to work, in a degree of policy isolation in terms that they understand but people from the outside tend to be slightly mystified by. It may be that that's broken down somewhat, since the Reagan

administration had no great love for the OAS. I don't think paid their bills and probably still haven't. That may be breaking down. It's really a language and a series of problems that pertained to the Inter-American system and the dialogue between the members of the system. And there's no reason why it shouldn't have special characteristics, because there have been special characteristics in the relationship. It's just the way it is.

But anyway I took the year of Latin American studies and remained in Latin America, became even more specialized. I spent the last twelve years overseas all in Andean countries so that's the ultimate in specialization. Four years in Bolivia, four years in Chile, two in Colombia and two in Ecuador. We've done the Bolivian portion which came after the year of Latin American studies.

Q: You were in Bolivia, just for continuity here...

GROVER: From 1966 to 1970, and then in 1970 I went into senior training at Stanford Graduate School of Business for one year; and then to Medellin as principal officer in 1971 to '73, which was a lot of fun and I loved Medellin.

Q: A different place then I gather than now.

GROVER: Well, it certainly had many of the same elements but drug culture did not dominate in Medellin. I don't think the Medellin cartel had been born yet. The drug problems were up in the northwest and mostly marijuana coming out with the banana boats from the Bay of Uraba in northwestern Colombia. At that time there were ten banana boats that were constantly in motion between Florida and Colombia. I don't think they ever docked. They carried a lot of bananas but they also carried an awful lot of marijuana which was usually thrown off the boat wrapped in plastic and then picked up by people. I remember receiving one report from, I guess it was the Custom Service, that a twelve ton shipment had been found on one of those boats.

Q: It was thrown off the boat?

GROVER: Thrown off the boat in the United States, at the port of arrival in the United States. There were two ports, it was either Miami or Tampa, and I've forgotten where it was but this was fairly common that very large floating objects were sometimes found near those boats and it was usually marijuana. That could very well be how the cocaine...

Q: You mean they were thrown in the water?

GROVER: Thrown in the water, that's right, and they float and are picked up by launches. They are dropped off at designated points on the route where they can be picked up by launches. The story at that time was that if an honest police chief was sent up to Turbo in the banana country—there were two consequences of his first week of duty; one was, if he remained honest, he would be dead at the end of the week. In other words, if he tried to enforce all of the rules on the banning of the export of illegal substances; or the more likely result was that he was corrupted by the end of the first week and was forced to participate in the business. That area was largely without law, and I think what happened was that that spread from the Bay of Uraba through the very enterprising Medellin business community. The remarkable thing about Medellin is, what good businessmen they are for whatever they happen to be engaged in. And if it's textiles, it's one of the major textile cities in the western hemisphere; they're very good businessmen. And then, if its drugs they are very good at that too, unfortunately. That's how its become in Medellin.

Q: You were the Consul there?

GROVER: I was the Consul. The Consulate was a relatively small post—it was a small post, no doubt about it. There were two Americans, a Vice Consul and a Principal Officer, an American secretary although she was local hire, and about five or six local employees all of whom were absolutely first rate. They were very good. I was very sad when the post closed because we lost...one of the great assets we have in these small posts are local employees who are so good, and often very dedicated as well. We lose a great deal in our understanding through the loss of the contacts that those local employees have.

Q: When did the post close?

GROVER: It was not for several years later. I was not there. As a matter of fact I can tell you exactly when it was. I replaced Tom Boyatt as DCM in Chile, and Tom went to Upper Volta as Ambassador and then he went to Colombia as Ambassador, and that would have been about 1980 to '82 that he was in Colombia and closed down Medellin—closed down both Medellin and Cali, but left open Barranquilla on the north coast in order to have, I guess, a drug listening post in Colombia. Curiously, in my time Barranquilla had been closed, and Medellin and Cali were kept open. Now circumstances have caused the decision-makers to reverse that. Barranquilla was reopened about five years after it was closed in order to try to keep an eye on the drug trade; and Medellin and Cali were closed because of the perceived danger. There is a great deal of violence in the Medellin area. It was always that. A lot of kidnapping. During the worst of the Violencia in Colombia from 1948 until the political parties tried to come to grips with...15-20 years later. Some of the worst of the violence had taken place in Antioquia, which is the general area of Medellin. One of the first things that happened when we arrived, a very prominent local guy was kidnapped, held for a month, and they found his body in a shallow grave. The family wouldn't pay the ransom that was asked. There were always kidnappings taking place. Fortunately there were no Americans kidnapped, no official or private Americans that were kidnapped.

Q: Who were the kidnappers? Were they just criminals doing it in a rather unorganized way, or is this...

GROVER: They were guerrilla that had a veneer of ideology. Some of them were doing kidnaping. The M-19 and the FRAC organizations like that were involved in kidnaping, but most of the kidnaping ranged from minor league activity in a small town; small kidnapings on an extortion basis; to groups without any real political import at all who were set up to kidnap and extort on a massive scale. They developed infrastructure for holding people

for a year or so while they pressed for payment of a ransom which could be as high as a million dollars.

Q: It was in effect a business.

GROVER: It was a business, a kidnap business. Occasionally there was a little political veneer on it, but that was more artificial. What there really was in Colombia over a period of years, was a breakdown in public safety, and elements that had aggrandized during this period, developed kidnapping as a way of making their living.

Q: Over a period of years beginning when?

GROVER: Well, off and on throughout Colombian history there has been violence, but since 1948. That's a landmark because that's when the Violencia broke out in its modern manifestations with the assassination of a liberal politician in Bogota. Coincidentally, at the same time that the OAS was being established in Bogota by the initial meeting, the liberal politician was killed on the street and the city erupted in violence, and the violence continued. [I'm trying to think of the name of the politician?]

Q: Then, in your years there in Medellin, what was the mandate, or the main thrust of our policy? What were you trying to do in particular? Was there any big particular, or was it simply managing consular matters as they came up?

GROVER: Well, consular matters were a real part of it. The big days in AID were in the process of being passed although, I think, Colombia was one of the largest US recipients in 1971. It began to diminish shortly thereafter. Peace Corps, there was some Peace Corps in our area. The major aspect of interest in Medellin was business and government, or politics. Antioquians from Medellin were usually a little ahead of the rest of the country on political developments. It was in Medellin that...

Q: What's an Antioquian?

GROVER: Antioquia is sort of the province of which Medellin is the capital, but it has taken on a meaning of more than that province, but that part of Colombia which consists of maybe five or six provinces which have more or less a similar history. And it's one, incidentally, an area in South America that sociologists have studied carefully to try to figure out why the area is so enterprising, in contrast to other areas that seemed to have a different part of the Hispanic experience in their background and tend to be rather non-performing. For example, the American businesses in Medellin, by and large, were managed by Colombians. Whereas in Cali, which had a totally different historical background, most of the American businesses were managed by Americans. It made Medellin very interesting for me. Many of the textile entrepreneurs, however, had been to the United States and been trained at Lowell Textile. There was a good pool of textile managers who knew the United States very well in Medellin, and why would you want to put in an American in charge of operation which Colombians could manage, probably at a lower cost to you, with all of the skill, and maybe more skill than an American in your company foreign service would have. So that was the picture.

But the businessmen in Medellin were a very clannish sort, and kept a very close eye on politics and did their best, whether liberal or conservative, to try to bring about “a kind of stability in which” the good people would come out on top. The businessmen in Medellin really organized and brought about the downfall of the dictator Rojas Pinilla, for example. This was well before my time. And in the one election that I saw in 1972, it was pretty clear that liberals and conservatives were getting together to undercut the position of the daughter of Rojas Pinilla who was a candidate—a national candidate at that time—and they succeeded. It's very difficult for a non- establishment person to get into a serious position in Colombian politics. Whether you're a liberal or conservative, the business of the country will support an establishment position which may make the two seem indistinguishable. Both parties will maybe have three liberals and four conservatives on the ballot. But only one of each which bears the endorsement of the liberal and conservative establishmentarians, which makes it rather dicey for people who would like to see a little

more upward mobility in their politics. They just didn't have it. Sons and daughters of former presidents seem to have the best chance of ascending to the presidency.

Well, I think they saw it, though, as an opportunity to try to have the appearance of stability during a transition period out of violence. And part of that arrangement that “the good people will run Colombia” was the alternation of liberals and conservatives for a period of time. An agreement that was made in order to try to bring stability to the political process. That's a foregone conclusion that establishmentarians are going to be the presidential candidates of the two parties during their period of alternation. But it has become a much more troubled country now than it was during our time, although it has many of the same problems that Brazil has with population growth. Colombia seemed a little more aware, and certainly Antioquians much better prepared to think about the problem of population growth than the Brazilians were. That was something that was always very alarming to me; that Brazilians thought a population growth not as a problem, but as somehow an opportunity. That was not the way Colombians looked at it. It diminishes the per capita income in this country unacceptably. I'm not suggesting that they were able to do much about it, they were simply a little more worried about it than the Brazilians were.

Q: There were efforts at family planning in Brazil, sort of slightly sub rosa but in fact I believe with some official backing but never with powerful force in the country, and never controlled the population growth much. But after Colombia...you left in what year?

GROVER: I left in '73 and came back to the Department for five years, all of it spent in management. Two years as Deputy Director of the Latin America Bureau, that is, Deputy Chief of the Administrative Office in Latin American Affairs. And then three years in central personnel as branch chief of middle grade political officers, of which there are about a thousand political officers that the three of us tended as the counseling service. Then after that I went from there to Chile as DCM in 1978, and from there to Guayaquil as Principal Officer. In Guayaquil I swapped jobs with Wade__(?) Matthews who had been the Consul General in Guayaquil and was very interested in becoming the DCM in Chile.

Chile, of course, is a whole different set of problems and it was not a very happy period in our relationships. If I was in Spain at mid-Franco, I was in Chile in mid-Pinochet. They were not very happy times in our relationship. Most of the diplomacy of those years was based upon—I guess you could summarize it as Letelier diplomacy. We were trying to get the extradition of the Chilean public officials who were seen to have the smoking gun in their hands. A smoking gun, that is figuratively speaking, because Mr. Orlando Letelier, who had been the ambassador to the United States from Chile and former Chilean Foreign Minister had been assassinated at Sheridan Circle by a job cooked up by the...

Q: This is tape 2, side 1 of my second interview with Charles Grover. We're talking about his tour as DCM in Chile.

GROVER: Well, I think our need to get the extradition of those Chilean officials who were the Manuel Conteres, the head of the Chilean secret service, Housa__ Espanosa(?), and Mr. Fernandes. Three Chileans who were seen to have a smoking gun on the Letelier assassination here in Washington. That was not a winning hand to hold because Pinochet was not about to admit that the government was involved, in the first place. And in the second place, it would have been very difficult if the local government were able to admit culpability in the first place, to see nationals extradited. That's always a problem. However, we were assured by the Chileans that this case would receive the full attention of the Supreme Court. To make a long story short, in the course of about two years the case was reviewed and found wanting the extradition request. There were a lot of details, and I think the book written by Taylor Branch on this subject is essentially correct as far as I know. He covers more ground than I'm personally familiar with, because he deals with all aspects of it, including part of the activity of the Chilean government seeking to get diplomatic visas in Paraguay. Coincidentally during the time that George Landau was ambassador in Paraguay. He was later ambassador during my time in Chile. It's a very complex case but clearly the Pinochet government, and the conservatives on the Supreme Court, who controlled the Supreme Court, were not about to permit, or admit, the

responsibility. Perhaps that was foreseeable. And whether or not there was any...I don't think there was any need for instruction between the Pinochet government, the executive branch, and the supreme court and the legislative branch. I think they were alike on the issue. It was something that the government could simply not admit that it was involved in, even though it had been caught with the gun smoking so to speak. The case is so complicated that I don't think there's any real need to go into it in detail, except to say that they did agree to the extradition of Mr. Michael Townley, the American, who was at the center of the conspiracy to assassinate Letelier. Townley was deported, brought to the United States, and agreed to cooperate. The case was based upon his confessions, which of course involved a plea bargain which the Chilean government insisted impugned the whole process. But in any event, two years passed pressing that and clearly the answer was no. The Supreme Court said there would be no extraditions, and that was that.

Q: What were the other major issues between the United States and Chile at the time? How were the relations, aside from this very important issue with the Pinochet government?

GROVER: The Pinochet government was sort of hoping that this issue would go away, and it couldn't go away. It was too important. So they were prepared to cooperate on most other issues, somehow or other, thinking that maybe it would go away. Most of the things that we had—we had bilateral interests on, they were more or less cooperative. But this was the overriding issue in our relationships, and when the final decision was issued, that there would be no extradition, which was pretty obvious earlier in the game. The Department of State decided the only access it had to the problem was at the post itself, and of course they decided they would reduce the post and lower the level. So the first six months of 1980—this is the end of the second year—we sent home 25 percent of our staff and their families, and closed out several of the missions including a truncated MIL group. That was just there to oversee the pipeline on military assistance which itself had been terminated back in 1976. The Peace Corps, which...

Q: Why was it terminated in '76? It was no longer necessary, or was it a political gesture?

GROVER: No, it was as a political gesture, and I'm trying to recall now whether it was principally...I think it was Pinochet saying that he would take no more under the circumstances that were set for him. And I've forgotten what those circumstances were. But anyway by the time I arrived in 1978 there was no new military assistance for Chile, but there was a moderately substantial pipeline. So there were still maybe a half a dozen people in the MIL group. There were always a sizeable number of people in the House of Representatives and Senators who were prepared to sign letters to Pinochet, sign letters to the Department of State. Chile was a political issue in key areas in the United States among individuals at any rate. And the result was AID was closed off except aid through private organizations, but without regard to, not through the Chilean government. And that was terminated also, or at least the personnel were terminated. Actually I think the Catholic Relief, the Seventh Day Adventist, and CARE still retained a degree of program but without AID supervision. The AID mission, which maybe had five or six people, and as many local employees, closed down completely by June of 1980. That was the terminal date by which time all of these elements that we were going to send home would be off post, and that included people at the embassy, it included USIA employees. I don't think there was a single part of the embassy, with the possible exception of the Marine Guards, that did not lose people through this reduction, which of course, made it even more difficult to perform the job at hand. We lost a person in the political section and of course it was the person who had been assigned particularly to report on human rights violations. That was assigned to somebody else. He wasn't caught because his function was human rights violations, but that's how it came out. He was the additional person so that had to be handled by someone else. You cut down on a number of people, and despite what some people say about the Foreign Service, you really do cut down on the work that they can perform. We also cut down on our associations with Chileans. I mean we sought not to associate...I can't give you the specifics, I don't recall well enough, but we certainly made

every effort not to associate overtly with the military, and with others. It was just how the post was structured. So in some regards there was less work to do too.

Then we got to 1981 and the Reagan administration replaced the Carter administration, and the Chileans were persuaded, for some reason, maybe they had some association with the Republican Party, that their relationship was going to be different. And, indeed, the notion was that the Reagan administration was going to try to see some positive element in the relationship with Chile until it was proven that this was not worthwhile. But there was the expectation there would be would be performance, that the Chilean government would be forthright in some regard or other on the Letelier affair. And they never were, so the Republican administration ended up essentially where the Democratic administration of Carter had, in considering Chile as something of a pariah. So we were fewer people, but we were doing fewer things; and being in the Foreign Service, when you're trying to persuade people who are good at what they do, and want to do things, that they shouldn't try to do too much. That was the nature of being DCM in Chile at that time. It was a negative role, well deserved I might say, somebody had to do it because I don't think there was any other posture for the US government to take at that point.

Q: What was the condition of the left wing? Were we at all concerned with that at this point which obviously not too long before had been a matter of great concern during the Eisenhower years?

GROVER: I don't think we were too concerned about the left, I think our principal concern was polarization. That unless Pinochet was a little more accommodating to a democratic process, that the situation was going to polarize, and that that strong Chilean center would have to choose between the right or the left. But actually that never really happened. I think that Pinochet was so tough, and the occasional act of violence on the far left were so frightening, that people were frightened into retaining a center position. Part of that may have been due to the fact that the economics of Chile for most of that period went very well. So as long as there's a degree of relative prosperity, the circumstances for political

polarization don't exist. I would have sworn that the Franco regime in Spain could not just fade away, but it did; and it did, I think, because of decisions that were made by ministers and a kind of economic prosperity. That I think was a big help as far as both Chile and Spain adjusting to different circumstances.

Q: And Chile has quite a sizeable middle class for a Latin American country.

GROVER: For Latin America, I think it does. Traditionally it has also the largest communist party, percentage-wise. It's probably as sizeable as any communist party in South America. It also has a socialist party. Allende was a socialist, not a communist. The communist in Chile, at least, followed slavishly the Soviet line. The socialist didn't. They were probably more committed thereby to a revolutionary line than the communist were because if it was a period of agreement between east and west, as for example during part of the Nixon years, then the communist in Chile would be less revolutionary, but not the socialists. The socialists saw the hallelujah days of collectivism ahead. They were always, at least Allende's brand, always had a very strong view of something coming, but through an evolutionary process. I don't know if you remember the interview between Allende and Regis DeBray, whom we found in the Bolivian jungles, in which Regis DeBray, I think, put in his book Revolution in the Revolution about the Chilean experience, and Allende was saying, “We're going to have a revolution, but we're going to persuade people to do it, and we're going to do it through a legal process. We're not going to do it through violence, that would ruin it as far as Chile is concerned.”

So traditionally in Chile the far right was very strong with perhaps about a third; and the far left was fairly strong; several parties making up about a third; and then the middle about a third also. One would expect with outrages occurring in Chile between the Pinochet government on the one hand, and mysterious organizations allegedly of the far left, leaving murdered people on the street, that somehow or other politics would polarize. But that didn't happen, and finally Pinochet stayed around so long that even many of his own supporters were persuaded that we have to enter into a transition and supported the

elections that took place last year after Pinochet himself had lost the plebiscite the year before. And I must say throughout this period, beginning in 1978 there began to be a little bit of electoral process. And Chileans love the electoral process. In 1978, after Pinochet submitted to pressure from labor unions; and permitted some elections in labor unions, as soon as that took place, elections took place in private organizations all over Chile. There had not been a single election from the time of the Pinochet takeover in 1973 until that point, but once Pinochet permitted it, then suddenly people began to have their own elections. And then, I guess, one can say it would only be a matter of time. But the old man couldn't hold on forever. He did hold on for what, 17 years or so.

Q: Yes, he didn't do too badly on longevity.

GROVER: Yes, but whatever the case, Chileans love elections, and I think you can count on them to be accurate in rendering the ballot. When Pinochet's constitution was up for popular plebiscite in 1980, he got 67 percent of the vote. And I think the campaign that he ran was rather skewed, but as somebody said, he also lost 37 percent. And that's true. His campaign was based on the fact that people would say, “What if we don't accept your constitution? What then lies in store?” He said, “Why should I say.” In other words, for Pinochet his approach towards the plebiscite issue was, “As far as I'm concerned you take me or we go off the edge of the world, and you'll have to imagine.” So a lot of people in that 67 percent were reluctant voters. They didn't see what the alternative was. There was no institutional base in Chile at that time to resume, without Pinochet, an electoral process. So that 37 percent that voted against Pinochet was really a very large percentage. If Pinochet had said, “Well, if I'm not here, we'll do the following and set forth a process which would be mutually acceptable to all parties,” Pinochet could very well have been out in 1980, but it wasn't in his interest to set forth an alternate because he had his own plan. Why should he?

The real lesson of this particular parable is that the Chileans will count the ballots right. They really do have, even though their democratic process has been disrupted recently,

they do have a long process that goes back to independence. Its had only occasional disruptions, although this disruption was by far the longest in their history.

What else can one say about Chile without getting into too much of the details. For my own personal point of view, it was probably the least happy assignment because of the circumstances involved. It was always a case of trying to rein things in, rather than having an ongoing and open association with people. I mean, people who wanted to do business with the United States, you'd have to simply say, “Our relationship at this point is cool. We cannot do that.”

Q: Chileans wanted to do business?

GROVER: Do business in various levels, I mean business, not in the business sense, but in the association sense. The Chileans, including people especially in the Chilean government, hoped that we would drop our obsession, as they saw it, in the Letelier case. And we told them, “How could we possibly do that? We have a major law and order problem involved here that seems to be sponsored by a foreign government.” And I must say that whereas the government held tough on this, I do not recall any Chilean ever saying, or ever choosing to deny that the government was involved. The evidence was altogether too overwhelming for that. It was there for everyone to see. It was a dilemma that the Chileans chose to try to forget, and that we simply could not forget. Even if we wanted to go on in other cases, we had an active legal litigation taking place in Washington, DC, with Michael Vernon Townley, some Cubans being tried in the District courts here; and ultimately convicted on the first round— this is the Cuban part. Michael Vernon Townley had already made a plea bargain and had been sentenced. He was principally culpable but he was also a material witness in the case. And the Cuban, one of whom I noticed just came out of hiding after 12 years, and was sentenced yesterday. One can hardly describe them other than Cuban gangsters, sort of underworld figures that were hired by Townley & Company to actually do the job. although Townley was the bomb expert himself, and had set it in the car. There was litigation in the District of Columbia

courts on this, and there would be for two or three years. How could our relationship be other than very restricted with the Chilean government.

At the same time Chile is such a lovely country, about an hour between the ski slopes and the coast, and all that wonderful sea food. So Chile is a nice place to be, even though the job wasn't the best in the world.

Q: And then it was Guayaquil?

GROVER: Then it was Guayaquil for two years. Actually I don't think there were any major issues there except an ongoing AID program, and assistance during the El Nino catastrophe, the natural disaster which occurs every few years in the Pacific where the temperature rises and it rains a great deal on shore. The fish disappear, and normal economic activity based upon both agriculture and fishing is totally disrupted. During the period that I was in Guayaquil a normal rainfall, which during the rainy season is about 700 centimeters, which is about three-fourths of one meter if my math is correct, became about 4 meters in the course of five months during the rainy season. I don't know whether you know Guayaquil, but its upper river—its very close to the equator—and it's up the Guayas River on rather low land, much of which is agriculture; during the period of the most recent experience with the Nino which was 1983, much of that land was converted into a sort of low ocean. And with Guayaquil being a shallow island in the sea, it was a very strange thing to see from the air, and a terribly tragic thing to experience from the land; because during the course of the last several years, a large number of Ecuadorians from very poor provinces had moved into the sugar fields surrounding Guayaquil. Some of these fields were under water if tides were unusually high. One of the characteristics of the Nino is that tides are very high on occasion. One of the projects that we decided that we could support was the draining of one of the major slums there, which I think was very successful. We participated a second year in cleaning out the drainage ditches that we had put in, but we transferred this in a period of two years to the Ecuadorian government rather than take on a responsibility that would never cease. But it was a slum in which perhaps 100,000 poor

Ecuadorians had moved into and were literally living in water. Some of them up to their knees in water in their own homes, because that's how high the tides were and the water would wash across this old sugar land.

Q: And your position?

GROVER: I was Consul General in Guayaquil at that point so we were fielding assistance from the embassy, and also from Washington. We had an OFDA assistance team there—Office Foreign Disaster Assistance of the USAID. We had a program developed draining the largest, worst of the Guayaquil slums, and also providing water purification plants for some of the towns up-country which were isolated in this shallow sea. Some really remarkable pumps that were brought in and would convert river water into pure water, at least until the engineers found that some of the deposits defied their engineering and managed to clog them up. But by and large, I think, the pumps did a creditable job during the worst of the period.

Q: Well, now we're pretty well into the 1980 zone. Was the drug issue— is that an issue with American relations with Ecuador?

GROVER: Not so much at that time. The neighboring countries, both Peru and Colombia, there was a major problem in both countries. We had a DEA office in Quito, and there was a branch office in the consulate in Guayaquil. But it was not as large a problem, it was really trying to handle transient issues, and also concerns about drug laundering to some extent. But the DEA guys had a good working relationship as far as I could determine with the police. It was not a major issue at that time in Ecuador. Maybe mostly by contrast, it was so bad in Peru, and so bad in Colombia that this was simply not a priority area. Nonetheless, the DEA guys were involved in cases all the time. And some of the provinces of Ecuador that were most distant from both Quito and Guayaquil, were involved. Those that were on the frontier of Colombia, Maldries__(?) and another that was on the frontier with Peru.

Q: What were the issues that the mission would deal with in particular?

GROVER: Well, actually in Guayaquil the issues were—I suppose they replicated in all of these posts. They were issues that people never think of, but they're fully consuming for the people who are there. Nationalization of the last remaining foreign owned private utility, EMILIK, which was owned by a company with headquarters in Miami, Florida. That issue, the contract, was a matter of trying to make sure the American investor was not disadvantaged by virtue of the fact that he was an American investor. And the short version of the story was that he desperately wanted to be ___ [laughter]. But the Ecuadorian government wasn't going to bite on it even though the 60-year contract which the utility operated on, was coming to a close. The American investor wanted to sell out because he didn't see any future, and he realized that as the termination date arose all of his principal people were going to find employment elsewhere. He couldn't afford to renew the equipment investments because he didn't know what would happen at the end of the 60 year period. So it was a case of following that. Then when the Christian Democratic president was replaced by a conservative Social Christian, Leon Febres Cordero, he had worked for EMILIK one time, and he believed in private investment so there was no possibility. He said from the very beginning that he would nationalize it. I think the 60 years was reached during Leon Febres Cordero's administration and they have given since that time short extensions. But I'm clearly not up to date on the EMILIK situation.

Q: In other words the government was determined finally to nationalize it, or not to nationalize?

GROVER: The government wasn't quite sure in its own mind. Mind you, the government that I had was the Christian Democratic government that followed Oswaldo Hurtado was the president. He was a Christian Democrat. He had been the vice presidential candidate to Jaime Roldes who was sort of a populist from the coast. Hurtado had undertaken to send a commission to study the nationalization of EMILIK. And EMILIK offered itself to be studied, and wanted to be taken over. This simply never reached decision, in part

because I think a lot of people on the coast thought that EMILIK did a pretty fair job. The other part was, where are you going to get the money? I don't think EMILIK wanted to accept Ecuadorian government bonds that could be redeemed at discount some point in the future. So the investor from Miami, who went home every weekend, but flew down in his private plane to run the company during the week, I guess he's still left with the firm. I don't know, but it's something that took a great deal of time but like most Foreign Service problems, things were adjusted but not solved. A Foreign Service issue is adjusted, not solved.

The other issues dealt with maritime shipping issues, for example, the oldest issues in the Foreign Service. In this case, reciprocity on using Ecuadorian and US bottoms. The issues are so arcane, and so inconsequential, except if you happen to be in Guayaquil at the moment, that they're not worth pursuing but there are a lot of people who are engaged in these, including the American shipping company, and the local Ecuadorian maritime authority. That took a great deal of working with them. Then the consular work was a major reason why Guayaquil remains open and always will.

Q: How do you mean, as a Consulate.

GROVER: The consular issues are immigration, visas. We handled a larger immigration visa case load at that time then all of Brazil, Chile and Argentina put together. But, of course, that's not saying very much because those three big countries are not big on immigration visas. Immigration visas characteristically come from countries where there is a great deal of illegal immigration, and people find some way of regularizing their status. And when that happens, you regularize the status of an Ecuadorian, you make it possible for maybe 12 to 40 people to come to the United States because of their friends and relatives under the preference system. We handled about 3600 cases a year at that point which is sizeable when you figure that each immigration case probably takes five or six hours of staff work. However, Colombia, with its much larger number, had about 7,000

cases, and probably Guyana had perhaps 12,000 at that time. But south of the north coast of South America we had the largest number in South America by far.

Q: When you said regularize their status. I don't know what you mean by that.

GROVER: Okay. Somebody goes into the United States illegally, they get a job, and they're illegal and they want to...in those days before the legislation which amnestied them, something had to happen that would cause them to regularize their...they might marry an American if you were young. For example, you could marry an American and immediately you're entitled to regularize your status. Or if you performed some kind of task which made it...I suspect there are more ways of regularizing your status than I know about because this is something done by the Department of Justice and the Immigration Service, not by the consular service.

Q: It doesn't bounce back to the consular.

GROVER: It doesn't bounce back except as immigration. An application for an immigration visa which is the fabled green card at the end of the rainbow.

Q: I see. After they are there you would still have to make arrangements...

GROVER: Oh, yes, but part of regularizing their status is leaving the country and applying for the immigrant visa; which you could do, if a Canadian post would permit up there, but most likely you'd have to go back to your home country and apply for the immigrant visa. But you had to leave the United States in order to do it, I guess because we wanted to have a clearer option of saying no at some point. There were a certain number of immigrant visas which were not acceptable. The legislation at that time had 30 some odd reasons why people can't go to the United States, and some of these reasons are applicable—sick people—all of this has changed and I haven't seen the legislation that was passed by the last Congress the same week as the budget proposal went in. But apparently it is a completely new piece of legislation that I'm sure consuls will have to

study very carefully, and will set up a whole new body of common law based on this new legislation.

But anyway, illegals, by somehow or other doing something that caused them to be acceptable to United States, making them eligible now to apply for an immigrant visa or for permanent residence, brought all of the business, most of the businesses that resulted in issued visas anyway to the immigrant visa section of our consulate. That's quite a big business. On the other hand, the numbers of non-immigrants was much higher and, of course, refusal rate was much higher too because until they could prove that they were legitimate visitors, they were considered to be intending immigrants. And that was universally the case among poor, and relatively poor, Ecuadorians. So we had a refusal rate, I suppose, of 40 or 50 percent. That's something that can be manipulated fairly easily so it may not be too meaningful. Our problem was nothing compared with Bogota, with Guyana, with the Dominican Republic, with Jamaica. The closer you get to the United States the more immigrant visa problems you have. It's time consuming. So the consular function was a genuine aspect of our reason for being there. And then we mentioned DEA, a certain amount of development activity through USAID. Of course, there was a resident American community that saw the consulate as a kind of local mayor kind of authority. And then I guess that's the sum of it. But I think Guayaquil is sufficiently important, sufficiently different, from Quito that we may close a lot of other posts but we won't close that one.

Q: Was that your last Foreign Service post?

GROVER: That was my last one except for a very interesting ten week period in Equatorial Guinea. I went out as an interim Charge between two Ambassadors and it was a lot of fun for ten weeks, and it reintroduced me to Africa and I realized how much I had missed by not having fulfilled that original assignment to Mozambique, and having an opportunity to do Africa. It was fascinating. Not so much Equatorial Guinea, which seemed to be working its way back into the middle ages, but things that you could see that were working other places in Africa. Things that were happening. It was an exciting place.

Q: A ten week tour there.

GROVER: We used to go shopping over to Douala in Cameroon, for example. There were only two Americans—I'm an expert on two-man posts—but we had hired every American citizen to perform some function or other at the embassy there. And during my ten weeks we also inaugurated the embassy office in Malabo. It used to be called Fernado Po, it's now the Island of Bioko in the country of Equatorial Guinea. The only Spanish speaking country in Africa, and it was very, very interesting. It awakened an interest that I guess I'll never really fulfill, but maybe through visits. To understand Equatorial Guinea you have to read The Dogs of War. Did you ever read that by Frederick Forsyth. It was his first thriller, and it's based upon an attempt by white mercenaries to take over an African country, and give it to a defeated Biafran general to run. And this is how Frederick Forsyth got it started. He was a white mercenary, and he had tried to take over Equatorial Guinea when the dictator Macias was in charge there. He failed, but he wrote the story and it was such a good one that he took up a whole new field, dropped white mercenary business, and became a novelist. It's an interesting area. It's right in the Bight of Biafra which is very close to Nigeria, and Cameroon, Gabon— where Africa turns from east-west to north-south on the west coast of Africa. But anyway, that was instructional but I guess it was too short to be of more than passing interest.

Q: Then you retired from there.

GROVER: I retired. I worked briefly at the Pentagon, and retired.

Q: Thank you very much.

GROVER: I've enjoyed it.

Q: It's very useful. So have I.

GROVER: I don't know whether any of this makes sense. The thing about the Foreign Service—and you get this notion, reading the annual book of documents that come out 20 years, or 25 years after the event has happened. The things that really occupy the posts are not the things that occupy public attention about a country. Those items that are in public diplomacy, your business for example, are very seldom the major issues that concern the government and the embassy. Things like soluble coffee in Brazil. The future of atomic energy in Brazil. Those are the things that dominated our relations with Brazil. Or the coffee issue. What happens to your coffee stock. Those things are not things that are on the mind of every American. Or the gray goods issue, restraint on exporting cotton goods to the United States.

Q: ...those sort of immediate issues seemed very important at the time— don't from a distance.

GROVER: Well, they are important because the two governments are concerned with them. Another thing. Our negotiations on airline routes. That's a legitimate activity of embassies and Foreign Offices, and those are very important to the two countries that there be reciprocity on these issues. But they're not issues that get much attention. These are things that embassies are concerned with. I think most Americans think of embassies as being full of the current issues of the day. Well, there's a certain amount of that. Certainly the Ambassador will address audiences on these subjects but the people in the embassies are involved in the major issues of which there are bilateral economic issues mostly, it could be bilateral political issues. And then consular affairs and the public issues which USIA is involved in which I'd always thought of as the fifth cone. I always felt they made a mistake back in 1953 and '53 when they separated USIA from the Department of State. It's all part of the same.

Q: Okay, Charles Grover. Thank you very much and this is the end of the second interview. Thanks a lot.

GROVER: Thank you. I'm not sure it adds up to very much as I sort of blabber on here. I don't know what it amounts to, but maybe it will be helpful in the future.

Q: It amounts to a Foreign Service career certainly, and I think we're interested in knowing and enjoying in this series what those careers are all about.

GROVER: I hope that's the case.

End of interview